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4 SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
5 JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL,
6 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
7 WASHINGTON, D.C.

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11 INTERVIEW OF: SARAH MATTHEWS

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15 Tuesday, February 8, 2022

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17 Washington, D.C.

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20 The interview in the above matter was held in Room 4480, O'Neill House Office
21 Building, commencing at 10:08 a.m.

22 Present: Representatives Luria, Schiff, Lofgren, and Cheney.

1 Appearances:

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5 For the SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE

6 THE JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL:

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8 ██████████, STAFF ASSOCIATE

9 ██████████, DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR

10 ██████████, INVESTIGATIVE COUNSEL

11 ██████████, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER

12 ██████████, SENIOR COUNSELOR TO THE VICE CHAIR

13 ██████████, CHIEF CLERK

14 ██████████, PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER

15 ██████████, OF COUNSEL TO THE VICE CHAIR

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19 For SARAH MATTHEWS:

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21 TIM BELEVETZ

1 [REDACTED] We'll go on the record.

2 Good morning. My name is [REDACTED] I'm a senior investigative counsel for
3 the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the Capitol and also
4 have a second title, which is of counsel to the vice chair of the committee, Representative
5 Liz Cheney.

6 This is a transcribed interview before the House Select Committee, and we have
7 with us by video some members. It looks like Mrs. Luria and Ms. Lofgren and Mr. Schiff
8 are on right now. They may drop off if they need to and other members may join during
9 the course of this interview. We'll try, if we notice their names come up here on the
10 screen, to note that for the record.

11 We're not going to try to mention every time that they leave just because it's too
12 hard to keep track of. So the record may not be complete at all times as to exactly
13 who's on, but we'll try to mention the members, at least when they join, and why don't
14 we go around and have the other staff members introduce themselves.

15 [REDACTED] Good morning. I'm [REDACTED] investigative
16 counsel for the select committee.

17 [REDACTED] My name's [REDACTED] I'm a professional staff member on
18 the committee.

19 [REDACTED] Good morning, Ms. Matthews. [REDACTED] I'm the chief
20 investigative counsel.

21 [REDACTED] And we have by video, [REDACTED], whose title, I believe, is senior
22 counsel to the vice chair, Representative Cheney.

23 Ms. Matthews, can you state your name and spell your last name for the record,
24 please?

25 Ms. Matthews. Yes. Sarah Matthews. And Matthews is M-a-t-t-h-e-w-s.

1 [REDACTED] Okay. And could counsel introduce himself.

2 Mr. Belevetz. Yes. Tim Belevetz, B-e-l-e-v-e-t-z. And I'm counsel to Ms.
3 Matthews.

4 [REDACTED] Okay. So Ms. Matthews, as you can see, we have a court reporter
5 here who will be making a transcript which will be the official record of this interview.

6 In addition to that, we are doing a video and audio recording, but it's the
7 transcript that is the official record of this proceeding. This is being done -- oh, and the
8 Vice Chair Representative Cheney has just joined us as well.

9 Ms. Cheney. Good morning, everybody. Thank you, Sarah, very much for
10 joining us.

11 [REDACTED] So this is being conducted in executive session, which means that it
12 is not public, but it is at the chair's discretion to make all or part of this public if he so
13 chooses.

14 You're not under oath, but as I'm sure you know, you do have an obligation to tell
15 the truth. So just as if you were under oath, it would be illegal for you to knowingly
16 make a false statement to us. We also recognize we're going to be asking questions
17 about things that happened a little bit over a year ago, so you can only answer to the best
18 of your recollection.

19 If you don't understand a question, just say so. We want to make sure you
20 understand the questions and that we get the most accurate answer possible. So if
21 anything is unclear, just speak up and say so. Similarly, if you want to consult with your
22 counsel, we'd be happy to take breaks any time you request. Also breaks at other times
23 if you would like. So just speak up and let us know any time.

24 EXAMINATION

25 BY [REDACTED]

1 Q So with that said, I'd like you -- if you could just tell us a little bit about your
2 professional background. So maybe just start, you know, what year did you graduate
3 from college and tell us about each of the jobs you've had since college?

4 A Okay. So I graduated from college in 2017, moved out to Washington, D.C.
5 right around that time, and my first job was on the House side with the Committee on
6 Homeland Security, where I was doing communications for them. I was digital
7 managers and communications aide. Spent a year there.

8 From there moved over to the House Energy and Commerce Committee, where I
9 was a press secretary, and spent another year there. While I was working there,
10 someone from the Trump re-election campaign approached me, asked me if I'd be
11 interested in going over to the campaign.

12 Q Who was that?

13 A Her name's Erin Perrini. She had been working for Leader McCarthy at the
14 time, so we had a close relationship from that experience. And then she went over to
15 the campaign to be a deputy communications director for Trump's 2020 re-election
16 campaign.

17 So I was one of the first communications staffers hired on his re-election
18 campaign, and that was in June 2019. And then spent a year there. While working on
19 the re-election campaign, I met Kayleigh McEnany. We formed a close relationship.

20 Q Was she working on the campaign at the time?

21 A She was working on the campaign at the time as press secretary, and I was
22 deputy press secretary, and we formed a close relationship. Then in, I believe,
23 April 2020, they wanted to move her over from the campaign to the White House to kind
24 of reshape the communications team over there.

25 So she moved over there in April of 2020, and once she was settled there, she

1 approached me and asked if I would be interested in joining her at the White House. So
2 I moved over from the re-election campaign to the White House in June 2020 and started
3 as deputy press secretary there.

4 Q Did you also have an additional title, like a special assistant to the President
5 or something like that?

6 A Yes. I was the special assistant to the President as well.

7 Q And to whom were you reporting?

8 A To Kayleigh McEnany.

9 Q So in a moment, I'm going to kind of walk through things chronologically, but
10 since we're talking about your career positions, when did you resign from the White
11 House?

12 A I resigned on the evening of January 6th.

13 Q And why did you resign?

14 A I resigned because, as you can see from my background, I spent my career
15 on Capitol Hill, so I think that the attack that day had -- it felt personal. I had friends
16 who were in the building, and I think in my role specifically, too, being a spokesperson for
17 the President, you know, you're asked to defend a lot, and to me, the way that he
18 handled that day and reacted felt indefensible.

19 Q In what way?

20 A I think that, you know, in times of crises, you want your leaders to meet the
21 moment, and to me it felt like he didn't meet the moment. And I -- I wanted to see from
22 him a stronger condemnation of the violence that we saw, but I think -- I kind of had gone
23 throughout the day hoping that he would meet the moment and I kept thinking, Okay,
24 well, maybe he'll get this tweet right, or maybe he'll say this and get this right. And I
25 think when the video was posted on Twitter, that was a breaking point for me.

1 Q Why was that a breaking point?

2 A I think that in the video he said, you know, We love you, you're very special.
3 And to me, there was no distinction between those who were peacefully protesting and
4 those who were causing violence. And it felt purposeful, and to me, it just didn't settle
5 with me right.

6 And so it was kind of in that moment I started having, you know, reporters come
7 up to me because reporters are able to walk into the press offices in the West Wing.
8 They have unfettered access. So reporters are asking me, you know, about this. I had
9 reporters texting me, and kind of in that moment, I just felt like I can't defend this. So I
10 kind of knew that I was going to resign after that.

11 Q When you said it felt purposeful that the President in the video statement
12 didn't distinguish between the peaceful protesters and the rioters, what makes you think
13 it was purposeful?

14 A I think just -- I think that I thought that, you know, there would be a stronger
15 condemnation of the violence, which there wasn't in the video. And then to say We
16 love you, you're very special, and not distinguish it, it just felt purposeful, but that's just
17 me reading, I guess, into the situation.

18 Q Okay. And we'll come back. As I said, we're going to go through things
19 chronologically, so when we get to that point, I'll ask about communications you had with
20 others and the White House staff about the video statements. So we'll get to that.

21 Now, I'm just going to sort of step back a little bit. So after the November 2020
22 election, did you form a view as to who won the presidential election?

23 Mr. Belevetz. If I can just interrupt, we want to make sure this is limited to sort
24 of legislative-type questions. I don't mean her personal views. I'm not sure that's
25 really relevant, so I just kind of flag that.

1 [REDACTED] Okay.

2 Mr. Belevetz. What happened on the 6th, what did you hear, what did you see,
3 but her own personal views, did he win the election, did he -- is that really relevant to the
4 committee's --

5 [REDACTED] I'll skip over it for now. It may be relevant to some of the questions
6 I'll ask later. But I'll skip over it for now.

7 BY [REDACTED]

8 Q Did the White House press office take a position on who won the 2020
9 presidential election?

10 A The White House press office was not designated to talk about the election
11 because of the Hatch Act. So we refrained from speaking on it. All that we would talk
12 about was the transition.

13 Q Okay. And what, to your recollection, did the White House press office say
14 about the transition?

15 A What I would share with the reporters was typically off the record, but I
16 would say whenever we were asked about it, that the President was pursuing litigation,
17 and that our belief was that if the litigation failed that he would engage in a peaceful
18 transition.

19 Q And who determined that that would be the position?

20 A I think that was just the consensus among the press team that that was
21 about -- as limited of what we could say legally on the election, and that everything else
22 we just kicked over to the campaign folks to talk about, but that we could say, you know,
23 he's pursuing this path, and that there will be a peaceful transition if it fails. But I don't
24 know -- I mean, I guess -- Kayleigh McEnany was the lead of our team, but I don't know if
25 she got that exact phrasing from someone else. So I can't really speak to that, though.

1 Q That's okay. So that was going to be my next question.

2 So you have no knowledge of whether Mark Meadows or the President himself or
3 anybody else above the press office approved that?

4 A Yeah. I can't confirm that.

5 Q Okay. Did you have any interactions with the President, or witness any
6 statements by the President where he expressed a view as to whether he had won or lost
7 the 2020 presidential election?

8 A I did not have any personal interactions with him on that.

9 Q Okay. Did anybody tell you about their interactions with him about that?

10 A Yes. Alyssa Farah, the former communications director said to me that
11 behind closed doors, that she had witnessed him kind of acknowledge the next
12 administration, and it seemed like he would slip up and, you know, privately acknowledge
13 that there was going to be an incoming administration.

14 Q Do you know roughly what the time frame was when the President
15 acknowledged that in front of Alyssa Farah?

16 A I think it was like a couple weeks after the election, but I can't remember
17 exactly the exact timing.

18 Q So to the best of your recollection, what did Alyssa Farah tell you that the
19 President said?

20 A Just that he acknowledged that there was an incoming administration.

21 Q And aside from that, were there any times where you heard that the
22 President expressed a view as to whether he won or lost the election, aside from his
23 public statements?

24 A Like I said, I did not have any personal interactions with him, or I had very
25 limited interactions with him after the election, and -- but, yeah, I think that he had kind

1 of communicated to some staff that he thought that the election was stolen and that he
2 had won.

3 Q Okay. So did his position seem to change over time or was he just being
4 inconsistent in the same time frames?

5 A It felt that it changed over time.

6 Q Do you know roughly when? I know it's hard to pinpoint something like
7 that.

8 A I think early December it felt like it changed, because I would say there was a
9 press conference at the RNC with Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell, and that was kind of
10 when it felt like there was a shift -- because he had been -- the President had been
11 listening to them. And then, the RNC held this press conference where they talked
12 about some of their, you know, theories on the election. And it felt like, from that day
13 forward, a shift where he might have been -- the President might have been
14 acknowledging privately that he had lost without really saying that he had lost, like I said,
15 kind of acknowledging, you know, maybe there was an incoming administration, but then
16 it felt like around early December that he started to get bad advice from some folks
17 who -- and then his view on it started to shift.

18 Q Okay. So this is a question that, I think, sort of goes back to why I was
19 asking whether you had formed a view about who won the election. Did the President
20 ever ask you to make any public statements that you were -- regarding the 2020 election
21 that you were uncomfortable with?

22 A Like I said, I did not have any -- I had minimal interaction with him after the
23 election, and it was not focused on that when I did interact with him or him, you know,
24 directly asking me to say something or do something, that wasn't the case.

25 And then -- and as I mentioned earlier, I would not have been able to in my

1 capacity as deputy press secretary because of the Hatch Act.

2 Q And you did not make public statements, like, in a private capacity regarding
3 the 2020 elections, did you?

4 A No.

5 Q But your boss Kayleigh McEnany did?

6 A Yes. She would, I guess, during her personal time, did some media where
7 she didn't use her official White House title.

8 Q So, even though she was making those statements in a personal or private
9 capacity rather than in her government position, did she ever discuss with you statements
10 she was making or anything the President was asking her to say?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Okay. What did she tell you?

13 A She -- during that time, she was going on Sean Hannity's show, I think, nearly
14 nightly, and she mentioned that she wanted to talk about some of the affidavits and
15 some of the things that the lawyers had filed in regards to the litigation that the President
16 was pursuing, and that she felt comfortable using the affidavits during those interviews to
17 point to as, you know, I guess what they saw as legitimate concerns about the outcome of
18 the election, but that she felt uncomfortable promoting the Dominion conspiracy theory,
19 and that the President had asked her to talk about that during her interviews.

20 Q Okay. So, to the best of your recollection, can you tell us what Ms.
21 McEnany told you about what the President asked her to do?

22 A Yeah. That's about the best of my recollection, just that she had
23 mentioned that he wanted her to go out and talk about the Dominion conspiracy theory.

24 Q Okay. And what was your understanding what the Dominion conspiracy
25 was?

1 A That the machines had been hacked and -- but it didn't feel like there was
2 strong proof of that.

3 Q Didn't feel that way to you or to Ms. McEnany or --

4 A Myself, but I know that Kayleigh did not feel comfortable talking about it,
5 and that's why she wanted to talk about the affidavits because it was -- there was
6 tangible proof of a legal document that she could point to in an interview and say, Hey,
7 you know, we have this, rather than -- the Dominion theory felt that there wasn't hard
8 tangible evidence, so she did not --

9 Mr. Belevetz. May I have a quick word with her?

10 [REDACTED] Sure.

11 Ms. Matthews. Something else. He wanted her to also do briefings from the
12 White House podium on this.

13 BY [REDACTED]

14 Q Regarding Dominion?

15 A Yes, and the election in general.

16 Q Okay.

17 A But she did not feel comfortable doing that because it would be, you know, a
18 blatant violation of the Hatch Act to do that from the White House podium. But he did
19 request her to do briefings on it as well, but we did not. And -- but, yes, like I said, she
20 was doing media interviews in her personal capacity at that time as well, which she felt
21 comfortable doing because she could, I guess, make the divide between her government
22 position and doing things in her personal capacity.

23 Q Now regarding the President's request that Ms. McEnany talk on television
24 about the Dominion theory, did Ms. McEnany tell you what she said in response to the
25 President's request, if anything?

1 A I can't recall what, you know, she said back to him. I think -- yeah, I can't
2 recall what she said.

3 Q So what did she end up doing?

4 A She did not talk about it, as far as I know, though. I didn't watch every
5 interview and she was going on Hannity nearly nightly.

6 Q And do you know why Hannity, in particular?

7 A They had a close relationship, so --

8 Q From when she worked at Fox previously or --

9 A I'm not sure. I'm not sure the nature of it, but they were close.

10 Q And then with regard to the President's request that Ms. McEnany make
11 statements about Dominion or the 2020 presidential election from the White House
12 briefing room, did Ms. McEnany tell you what she said to the President about that
13 request?

14 A To do briefings from the White House briefing room?

15 Q Yes.

16 A I think she tried to dissuade him from that.

17 Q Okay.

18 A But I'm not sure how. I'm not sure what was said.

19 Q Do you know if she was successful?

20 A Well, we never held one, so --

21 Q And do you know whether that's because the President backed down or she
22 just decided to disregard his request or whatever?

23 A I'm not sure, yeah.

24 Q Okay. Was there anything else that you can recall that the President asked
25 Ms. McEnany to do that she was uncomfortable with?

1 A I can't recall at this time.

2 Q So at some point -- and correct me if I'm not characterizing this accurately,
3 but my understanding is that at some point around, say, mid-December of 2020, Ms.
4 McEnany was not appearing on television as frequently in her personal capacity, and not
5 making as many statements in her personal capacity.

6 First of all, is that consistent with your understanding, and if so, do you know the
7 reason why?

8 A I -- I can't recall how frequently she was going on TV at that time. We
9 weren't holding White House briefings, so she certainly wasn't going on TV in that regard,
10 but I'm not sure how frequently she was going on Hannity at that point. I can't recall, to
11 be honest.

12 Q Okay. Did she ever say anything to you about, like, avoiding doing media
13 appearances?

14 A No, I don't think so. I think it was more focused on the briefings, and not
15 being able to do them because they would have been -- the focus would have been
16 campaign-related, which she couldn't talk about from the podium.

17 Q At some point we understand around mid-December, Ms. McEnany went to
18 Florida for a couple of weeks to the extent that that's for, you know, personal or family
19 reasons, we don't need to know about that, but do you have any reason to think that
20 there was some professional reason why she did not want to be either at the White
21 House, or going on television in her personal capacity to make statements about the 2020
22 election?

23 A Well, her family lives in Florida and so -- and she has a young daughter, and
24 so I think that she wanted to go home to spend time with her daughter. I do think
25 that -- I will say that -- I know that post-election, she did try to actively avoid the

1 President.

2 Q Tell us about that.

3 A Because he wanted her to do the briefings from the podium about the
4 campaign, and wanted her to talk about Dominion. And so, I think she tried to limit her
5 interactions with him, but I can't recall -- like, I honestly don't remember how long she
6 was in Florida during December. I would chalk that up to being home for the holidays,
7 I'd imagine, but I do know that she did say to me privately that she was trying to avoid
8 him for that reason, because he was making those requests.

9 Q Do you remember roughly when that was?

10 A Unfortunately, I do not.

11 Q Do you remember anything else about what she said about that?

12 A No.

13 Q And do you know how she went about doing that? I would think as White
14 House press secretary, it would be kind of difficult to avoid the President? Do you know
15 how that manifested itself?

16 A So he never came over to the press offices in the West Wing because, as I
17 mentioned earlier, the press offices, the media has unfettered access to. And so, if she
18 stayed -- this is my theory of maybe how she went about that, not that she said this to me
19 explicitly, but the President would never come over to the press offices because of that.

20 And, so, I think she tried to stay in that area knowing that he wouldn't walk over
21 that way.

22 Q Did you and others have a meeting with the President, whether formal or
23 informal, on January 5th, 2021?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Can you tell us how that came about?

1 A Yes. So on the evening of January 5th, I was sitting at my desk in the West
2 Wing, and one of the President's personal aides, Nick Luna, approached me and some
3 others who were sitting there, two of my colleagues, Jalen Drummond and Brian
4 Morgenstern, and he approached us and said that the President wanted the press team
5 assembled in the Oval.

6 And by the time that we were -- walked over there, the entirety of the press team
7 was already assembled in there. And I had kind of noticed that people were leaving the
8 press offices one by one, and so, I had noticed that people were trickling out and so then
9 when I walked into the Oval and everyone was there, it made a little bit more sense, but I
10 walked in, and, like I said, the entirety of the press team was assembled in there, those of
11 who were still on staff at that point because we had had a couple members who had
12 moved on to other opportunities, but -- and if you want, I'm happy to name the names of
13 the folks who were there, but it was the press team, then the President, Dan Scavino, and
14 Nick Luna.

15 And we walked -- we walked in and when we walked in, the staff was kind of
16 standing up and assembled along the wall. And the President was at the desk, and Dan
17 Scavino was on the couch, and the President was dictating a tweet that he wanted
18 Scavino to send out. I can't recall what the tweet was verbatim, because I missed kind
19 of majority of that conversation, but it was something where I think at the end of it he
20 tagged, or he requested that Scavino tag like @FBI, @DOJ. So if you guys have the
21 record of what his tweets were on the evening of January 5th, it would've been about
22 that timing when I walked into the room.

23 So then after they sent out that tweet, then the President started talking about
24 the rally the next day. He had the door of the Oval opened to the Rose Garden, because
25 you could hear the crowd already assembled outside on the Ellipse, and they were playing

1 music and it was so loud that you could feel it shaking in the Oval.

2 And he was in a very good mood, and I say that because he had not been in a good
3 mood for weeks leading up to that. And then it seemed like he was in a fantastic mood
4 that evening. And he was so excited. He was, you know, talking about the crowd that
5 was assembled and how, you know, excited he was for the following day. And then he
6 did look to the staff and ask for ideas of how, if I recall, he said that we could make the
7 RINOs do the right thing, is the way he phrased it.

8 And no one spoke up initially because I think everyone was trying to process what
9 he meant by that. And so -- and then how we could make the next day, you know, a big
10 day.

11 And then, one of my colleagues spoke up and said that the focus should be his
12 speech and that --

13 Q Do you remember who that was?

14 A Yes. It was one of the other deputy press secretaries, Judd Deere.

15 Q Okay.

16 A And I think that he said, you know, the focus for tomorrow should be your
17 speech. And then the President kind of seemed to drop whatever else he was trying to
18 get at, because I don't think many of us knew what he meant by trying to get them to do
19 the right thing.

20 I mean, we knew what he meant in regard to trying to get them to send back the
21 results, but I think we didn't know what he meant by ideas for how to get them to do
22 that.

23 And, so, yes, then my colleague Judd said, you know, the focus for tomorrow
24 should be your speech. And then after that, we were just kind of standing around
25 talking with the President. And then because we had the entire press team assembled

1 there, Kayleigh suggested that we do a photo with him. And so then, we took a team
2 photo and left.

3 Q And was that the purpose of the meeting was to do the photo, or why was
4 the press team brought in?

5 A The purpose was not to do the photo. Kayleigh jumped at the opportunity
6 to do a photo because we had not done a team photo with him, and she noticed that he
7 was in a good mood that evening, and so she thought it was the right opportunity to ask
8 him because we had discussed, you know, in the weeks, I guess, leading up to that day
9 that she had been wanting to ask him, but she didn't find the right time, because, as I had
10 mentioned, he wasn't in the best mood.

11 Q So what was your understanding of what the purpose of the meeting was?

12 A So, like I said, I kind of got brought in at the last second. The entire press
13 team was assembled there other than me and two of my other colleagues, and we kind of
14 got brought in at the tail end. So I'm not sure what else was discussed before I entered
15 the room, but as I mentioned, I had noticed people trickling out for a while, and so they
16 were in there for -- I couldn't tell you how long, but enough time that I assume that other
17 things were discussed prior to myself entering the room.

18 Q Okay. So I think it would be helpful if you can just mention the names of
19 the people you recall who were there.

20 A Uh-huh. So it would have been Kayleigh McEnany, Chad Gilmartin, Lindy
21 Rose, Judd Deere. Then Margo Martin, potentially Gaby Hurt -- trying to think who else
22 would have been there. Davis Lamb, I think, is his last name. May need corrected on
23 that. And then -- and then myself, Jalen Drummond, and Brian Morganstern were the
24 last ones to walk in.

25 Q Did anybody after the meeting tell you anything about what happened in the

1 meeting before you joined?

2 A No. And I didn't ask.

3 [REDACTED] Okay. I'm going to pause here before we turn to January 6th event
4 and see first, if any, members have any questions? Mrs. Luria?

5 Mrs. Luria. Hi. Good morning, and thanks for being willing to come talk to the
6 committee. I was just curious, was this a frequent occurrence that the whole team
7 would be called together into the Oval Office? If so, how frequently did that happen?

8 Ms. Matthews. No. That was not a frequent occurrence.

9 Mrs. Luria. Was this the only time you recall that happening?

10 Ms. Matthews. I believe so.

11 Mrs. Luria. Okay. Thank you.

12 [REDACTED] Any other members have questions?

13 [REDACTED] Thank you, [REDACTED]

14 BY [REDACTED]

15 Q Ms. Matthews, anything else you remember President Trump saying at that
16 meeting? You mentioned how to make the RINOs do the right thing. Were there any
17 other phrases that he used at any point during the meeting that you recall?

18 A I can't recall. That one stuck out to me, though.

19 Q Okay. Did he make reference to this crowd? Did he point to it, talk about
20 it?

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q Tell me more about that. What did he say about the crowd?

23 A So, yeah, like I mentioned, he had the door open to the Oval, so we could
24 hear the crowd, hear the music. It was a freezing night in January, so it was -- the fact
25 that the door was open made the room absolutely frigid, but he was so excited that, you

1 know, just to be able to listen to their energy, and you could tell how excited he was that
2 the crowd was already assembled and ready for the following day.

3 And just -- yeah, he, I guess, was kind of just talking about it in that sense. I can't
4 remember anything specifically he said, but just that he was excited that there was this
5 crowd there.

6 Q Okay. So you're sort of anticipating my question. Was it, in your view, his
7 excitement tied to the presence of the crowd and the energy of the crowd?

8 A Yeah. That's what I think.

9 Q Okay. What, if anything, do you recall him saying about the next day?
10 About what was going to happen or what this crowd was going to do, or where they
11 would be the next day?

12 A I don't think there was any acknowledgement of that. Not that I can recall.

13 Q Okay. Did he say anything about the Capitol?

14 A No.

15 Q Okay. And when he asked for advice, how to make the RINOs do the right
16 thing, you recall Judd Deere speaking up and talking about the speech. Anyone else --

17 A No.

18 Q -- provide any suggestions? No?

19 A No.

20 Q Okay. So nothing else that he said about that that you recall from that
21 meeting?

22 A Yeah. Nothing else from the time I entered the room --

23 Q Okay.

24 A -- was said about that.

25 Q Appreciate that. I want to take you back to something you said earlier

1 about Ms. Farah and her statements to you that there were times that the President
2 would, I think, you said slip up.

3 Do you remember her ever telling you a specific story about something that he
4 said along those lines?

5 A Just that he would acknowledge that there was an incoming administration, I
6 think, was how he kind of slipped up.

7 Q Okay.

8 A I can't -- oh, sorry.

9 Q I'm sorry to interrupt you. No, go ahead.

10 A I can't recall, though, in what context it was said.

11 Q So was it a general description of sometimes he slips up or was it he just
12 slipped up or he said this? Was it a story specifically about him saying something, or
13 was it a broader observation?

14 A I think a broader observation.

15 Q Okay. So she didn't say, Hey, I was in the dining room with him and he just
16 said this? It was nothing like that?

17 A No.

18 Q Okay. Last thing, you also talked about the Hatch Act. Tell me how it was
19 when you were a White House staffer that you got any guidance, training, information
20 about the restrictions of the Hatch Act?

21 A I don't know if I can recall, but I think it was kind of just an obvious thing
22 where -- I'm sure there might have been some sort of, when I was on-boarded about it,
23 but just -- I already kind of knew what the line was of what I could and couldn't talk
24 about, you know.

25 Q Okay.

1 A With not being able to speak on the campaign.

2 Q Right. Fair to say that the general rule is that professional staff in the
3 White House or other government agencies cannot do campaign-related stuff when
4 they're on duty?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Is that your general understanding of the main provision of the Hatch Act?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. Was there a process by which things would need to be cleared, or if
9 someone like you or Ms. McEnany wanted to do something political, they'd have to get
10 clearance or permission?

11 A Yes. And I think that Kayleigh did go through that process talking to the
12 White House counsel's office about how she could legally go about doing media
13 interviews in her personal capacity. And I think what they settled on was that she
14 needed to not use her government title during those interviews, and then obviously, do it
15 during not office hours, and not from the White House grounds either.

16 Q Okay. Sounds like three restrictions: Can't use your title, can't do
17 anything from the White House grounds, and you can't do anything during the business
18 day?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Okay. How do you know that those were the restrictions? Did Ms.
21 McEnany tell you that, or did you hear that from some other source?

22 A Yeah. That was discussed between Ms. McEnany and I.

23 Q I see. Were there other people in the White House besides Ms. McEnany
24 during your time, this post-election period, who were doing election-related things?

25 A Not that I recall.

1 Q She was the only one that you remember going through this Hatch Act
2 evaluation process?

3 A Yes. I think that -- yeah. I can't recall anyone else doing any other
4 interviews.

5 Q Okay. No one else in the press office was doing anything like Kayleigh --

6 A No. No.

7 Q And White House counsel's office, were they sort of the source of
8 information or guidance about Hatch Act-related things?

9 A Yes. And I think that she did seek their guidance from what I recall --

10 Q Okay.

11 A -- about how to do this.

12 Q Do you remember ever having any contact with Pat Cipollone or any of the
13 other lawyers in that office about Hatch Act-related stuff?

14 A No, not myself.

15 Q Okay. And do you remember whether there was ever -- was there a
16 document or guidance or something that you could consult White House specific about
17 this Hatch Act and the rules?

18 A No, I don't think so.

19 Q Okay.

20 [REDACTED] Okay. That's all I have, [REDACTED] Thanks.

21 BY [REDACTED]

22 Q Okay. So unless any members have any questions, we'll turn to January 6th
23 now.

24 Okay.

25 So I'd like if you could just kind of walk us through your day in as much detail as

1 you can regarding January 6th, 2021.

2 So roughly, what time did you get to the White House?

3 A I think I got there a little later than I usually would, probably like 9:30.

4 Q Okay. And as you came in, were the -- did you see crowds assembled or
5 anything like that?

6 A Not from the entrance that I came in.

7 Q Okay. What were your sort of expectations as far as what was going to
8 happen on January 6th?

9 A So I thought -- I thought that this day would be almost a celebratory day in
10 the fact that it would be the President's last rally as President. And so, I -- yeah. I
11 guess that --

12 Q Did you have any role in preparing the President's remarks for the Ellipse
13 rally?

14 A No.

15 Q Did you have any role in planning the event --

16 A No.

17 Q -- the rally itself?

18 Okay. Did you go to the rally?

19 A I did.

20 Q Okay. So tell us what you saw when you got there.

21 A Yeah. So a couple of my colleagues and I walked over from the West Wing
22 to the Ellipse to watch the rally, and we stood on the side of the stage and watched the
23 President's remarks.

24 Q Okay. So if you can look at exhibit 1 in your binder --

25 A Uh-huh.

1 Q -- this is a tweet from the President at 6:00 a.m., January 6th, 2021?

2 A Okay.

3 Q Starts off: "If Vice President @Mike Pence comes through for us, we will
4 win the presidency." And then it ends with: "Mike can send it back, exclamation
5 point."

6 So first of all, did you have any involvement in the preparation of that tweet?

7 A No.

8 Q Do you know who, if anybody, besides the President did?

9 A No.

10 Q Do you remember whether you saw that tweet?

11 A When I saw it?

12 Q Do you remember whether you saw it?

13 A Oh, honestly, I don't think so, but I think he had tweeted something probably
14 similar to this before.

15 Q Okay. And then if you look at exhibit 2, it doesn't look like this has the time
16 of date on it, but it was January 6th, 8:17 a.m., pretty similar.

17 Second one says: All Mike Pence has to do is send it back to the States and we
18 win.

19 Same question on that: Would you have any involvement in preparation of that?

20 A No.

21 Q Any idea who was involved other than the President himself?

22 A No.

23

BY [REDACTED]

24 Q Before you leave that, you mentioned, Ms. Matthews, that the night before
25 that Dan Scavino was actually typing out a tweet or something like that during the

1 meeting at which the press staff came to the Oval. Is that right?

2 A Yes.

3 Q Was that a typical pattern that Scavino would be typing something that the
4 President was talking about or dictating?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Was that, in your understanding, generally how the President's Twitter
7 account was managed that Scavino was the person often doing the actual typing and
8 transmission?

9 A From my understanding, I think that Scavino and the President were the only
10 two people with access to the account.

11 Q Okay. So if you're in the press office and your job, you and the others, is to
12 be in charge of the President's communications, did you have any visibility into, preview
13 of him tweeting stuff or was that a totally separate process?

14 A We could make recommendations on tweets, either going to the President
15 directly, or to Scavino and -- but it wasn't like every tweet that got sent out was cleared
16 by the communications team prior.

17 Q I see. So sometimes you and the communications team would just see a
18 tweet issued that you had nothing to do with?

19 A Yes.

20 Q You're laughing as if that happened a lot?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. But there were times where you all would say, Hey, let's tweet this
23 or let's put this out and you had to go to Scavino or the President himself to seek that?

24 A Uh-huh. Yes.

25 Q Okay. Okay. In terms of the ratio overall of tweets that were suggested

1 or prompted by the communications team versus the ones that you were surprised at,
2 what were the sort of relative ratio over all his Twitter account?

3 A I think more surprised than anything, but we didn't -- we would only
4 recommend something if it felt completely necessary.

5 Q Right. I see. That was rare. Most of the time his tweets were just things
6 that you didn't have any visibility into, the press office didn't prompt or script or anything
7 like that?

8 A Correct.

9 Q Okay.

10 [REDACTED] That's fine. Thank you. I'm sorry to interrupt.

11

BY [REDACTED]

12 Q Do you know whether the President ever typed them up himself on the
13 phone and send them out, or did they all go through Dan Scavino?

14 A I don't know that actually, but I assumed that there was some way that he
15 was typing them out himself.

16 Q Okay. What led you to assume that?

17 A Sometimes you could tell when a tweet was written by him.

18 Q Like typos or what -- what made you think that?

19 A Just painfully obvious.

20 Q What would make it obvious?

21 A The phrasing of it, the capitalization of letters. It just -- sometimes Dan's
22 seemed a little bit more grammatically correct.

23 Q Okay.

24

BY [REDACTED]

25 Q And did you -- I'm sorry to belabor this, but were there times where there

1 was a hard copy that was given to him that he would mark on and then end up giving to
2 Dan to type out.

3 A I think that when we would give recommendations, we would usually have a
4 hard copy written out, show that to him. And then if he would sign off, then it would
5 get sent out, but I think usually then it would be sent to Dan to be the one to send out.

6 Q Okay. And do you ever remember him tearing those drafts up or
7 other -- destroying other documents upon his completion of review of them?

8 A No, I don't recall. Usually, I wasn't there for when it was presented to him.
9 Kayleigh would be the one who would bring a tweet idea to him.

10 [REDACTED] Okay. Thanks.

11

BY [REDACTED]

12 Q So when you got to the Ellipse on the morning of January 6th, tell us where
13 you went and what you saw?

14 A Yeah. So we were on the side of the stage -- I guess if I was facing the
15 crowd, I would have been on the right-hand side of the stage, and, yeah, there was a
16 massive crowd assembled. Those that, you know, we could see at the forefront of the
17 crowd seemed excited, happy, peaceful, and -- yeah.

18 And then I remember that there was some other White House staff there. Like I
19 said, I walked over with a group, but there were some other staffers there as well, and
20 then there were also some campaign staffers there as well. And -- because I had been
21 at the campaign previously, I knew some of them. And so talked with some of them.

22 And then -- yeah, honestly, the President's speech I wasn't, I guess, paying
23 attention to the entire time because a lot of it was stuff I had heard him say before. And
24 then, like I mentioned, I run into some old friends from the campaign, was talking with
25 folks, et cetera.

1 Q The President, during his remarks, did make some comments about Vice
2 President Pence similar to the tweets. He said things like all Vice President Pence has to
3 do is send it back to the States to recertify and we become President, and you're the
4 happiest people. And he said: And I actually just spoke to Mike. I said, Mike that
5 doesn't take courage. What takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage. And
6 then we're stuck with a President who lost the election by a lot and we have to live with
7 that for 4 more years. We're just not going to let that happen. And then he made
8 some other comments about the Vice President.

9 So first of all, do you have any knowledge of whether that was the comments
10 about the Vice President were in the prepared remarks?

11 A No, I did not see the prepared remarks prior to the speech.

12 Q Okay. Did anybody afterwards say anything about whether the President
13 had ad-libbed it versus being in the prepared remarks?

14 A No, but I do remember that we knew -- I believe that morning, maybe, as the
15 President's speech began is when the Vice President's letter went out about what he was
16 planning to do that day. And so, the President was on stage so we knew that he did not
17 know about that.

18 Q How did you learn about the Vice President's statement?

19 A I think a colleague of mine, like, showed me the news. We were
20 not -- sorry. We were not, I guess, told by the Vice President's communications team
21 that that was coming from my understanding, at least I was not told. Maybe, you know,
22 others were clued in, but I was not told to expect that.

23 Q But did you know what the Vice President's position was regarding his role at
24 the joint session of Congress?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Did you know that from public reports or internal communications at the
2 White House or both?

3 A I think both.

4 Q Okay. What do you recall hearing internally within the White House about
5 it?

6 A I think just that the Vice President had made clear that he thought that he
7 didn't have the constitutional authority to do that.

8 Q Do you remember who told you that?

9 A I can't recall.

10 Q Okay.

11 A No.

12 Q And when you said made clear, did you hear that the Vice President said that
13 to the President?

14 A No. All I know is that I just knew that he was not going to be doing that.

15 Q In advance of the President's speech at the Ellipse, did you have any
16 understanding as to whether the President was or was not going to go to the Capitol that
17 day?

18 A I did not expect him to go to the Capitol, nor was that discussed prior, to my
19 knowledge, but I remember when he said it during the speech, a colleague and I talked
20 about it and we were, like, there's no way he's walking to the Capitol. It's too cold.
21 And Secret Service would never let him.

22 So it was -- it did stick out to me during the speech that he said it, but it
23 was -- yeah. Assumed that there was no chance of that actually happening.

24 Q Okay. And then do you know after the speech, were you involved in any
25 discussions about whether the President would, in fact, go to the Capitol?

1 A I was not involved in any discussions about that.

2 Q Okay. Going back to the comments the President made about the Vice
3 President. What was your reaction when you heard those comments?

4 A Yeah. I was disturbed.

5 Q Why?

6 A Because I think that Mike Pence is a good man, and that he was very loyal to
7 the President and so, it felt wrong for the President to attack him.

8 Q So what did you do after the rally?

9 A So after the rally, I walked back to the West Wing with some of my
10 colleagues and went back to the press office. And we sat down, were trying to get
11 warm and then started watching the TV coverage. And about that time, I think, you
12 started seeing some of the protesters arriving to the Capitol.

13 Q Okay. And what happened next?

14 A So, I think we started seeing -- yeah, the initial images and videos of, like,
15 these crowds of people arriving, and I remember saying to some of my colleagues that I
16 thought that this could escalate quickly.

17 Q Why did you think that?

18 A Because it just -- I think, you know, them marching to the Capitol, the crowds
19 of people, it looked like the police presence was lacking. I mean, there was bike rack
20 around the Capitol, and so I thought this could escalate quickly if, you know, you get
21 some bad apples who want to cause violence.

22 And I was nervous about the bike rack and thinking that -- and then, I think, a little
23 bit after that, you started seeing, like, images and videos of people pushing up against the
24 bike rack. And so --

25 Q Did you think that the President had gotten the crowd riled up in his speech?

1 A So like I said, a lot of what he had said was things that I heard him say
2 before. I was also unaware of -- I did not watch the speeches prior to the President.
3 So I think it was like Don Jr. and Rudy Giuliani, and so, I did not, I guess, know that going
4 into watching the rally either that, you know, maybe some of the rhetoric that was used
5 that could've potentially riled up the crowd.

6 But yeah. We started seeing the images of, you know, some of the protesters
7 pushing up against the bike rack and thought that -- talked with colleagues about how
8 this wasn't good, this could escalate quickly.

9 Q Who were the colleagues?

10 A The two that I was mainly speaking with were Ben Williamson and Roma
11 Daravi.

12 Q And Ben Williamson was deputy chief of staff?

13 A He was the senior adviser to the chief of staff, Mark Meadows.

14 Q Thank you. And the other person you mentioned was who?

15 A Roma Daravi. She was the -- I believe her title was, like, deputy strategic
16 comms director, but she -- her role primarily focused on broadcast bookings. So if
17 someone in the West Wing was doing a media interview, she was the one working with
18 the producer, you know, TV network to schedule.

19 Q And where were you?

20 A We were in the West Wing in an area called Upper Press. So there are two
21 press offices, one is called Lower Press and that is directly beside the briefing room.
22 And kind of right off the Rose Garden. And then I sat in an area called Upper Press that
23 was directly beside where the White House press secretary's office was and around the
24 corner from the Oval.

25 Q Okay. So go back to telling the story of what happened. You all were

1 watching what was happening.

2 Do you remember what network or networks you were watching?

3 A No. I don't remember the network, but if I had to guess, CNN, but
4 we -- yeah. So we were watching. I know that we -- I expressed to my colleague that I
5 thought that, you know, it was bad, and that this could escalate quickly. And I think
6 around that time, Kayleigh popped in to tell us to not comment on what we were seeing.

7 Because as I mentioned earlier, the media can walk back to our offices and has
8 unfettered access.

9 Q So I just want to understand, what did -- I'm sure you don't remember the
10 exact time, but what had happened? Like, had you seen people breach the bike racks,
11 as you referred to them, perimeter and got closer to the Capitol at that point?

12 A I cannot recall, yeah, when that was -- when Kayleigh relayed that message.

13 Q Did she say anything about why you weren't supposed to say anything to the
14 media?

15 A I think that she said that Meadows, the chief of staff, did not want us to
16 comment on it at the time.

17 Q Did she say anything about what Meadows had said as far as why you
18 weren't supposed to comment?

19 A I know that later -- I don't think it was in that moment -- and apologies, I
20 can't recall the exact timing of when this was said, but there was an acknowledgement of,
21 Well, it could be antifa, and so we don't want to comment on this right now because we
22 don't know what's happening. We don't know who these people are or what's
23 happening.

24 Q Do you remember who suggested it could be antifa?

25 A Kayleigh mentioned it, but I don't think it was in that moment when we were

1 given the order of, you know, don't comment on this right now. I think initially we were
2 given that order of don't comment on this because we don't know what's happening, but
3 then, I think a little bit later in the day is when she mentioned that, you know, it could be
4 antifa.

5 Q When she mentioned it could be antifa, did she say whether somebody else
6 had suggested to her that it could be antifa?

7 A No.

1 [11:05 a.m.]

2

BY [REDACTED]

3 Q Okay. So what happened next?

4 A So, then, you know, we had all talked about -- at that point about how it was
5 bad and, you know, the situation was getting out of hand. And I know Ben Williamson
6 and I were conferring and we thought that the President needed to tweet something and
7 tweet something immediately. And I think when Kayleigh gave us that order of "don't
8 say anything to the media," I told her that I thought the President needed to tweet
9 something.

10 And then I remember -- then I remember getting a notification on my phone.
11 And I was sitting in a room with Roma and Ben, and we all got a notification, so we knew
12 it was a tweet from the President. And we looked down, and it was a tweet about Mike
13 Pence.

14 Q Okay. So we'll turn to that in just a moment, but before we do that -- so,
15 when you said to Ms. McEnany that you thought the President needed to tweet
16 something --

17 A Yeah.

18 Q -- what was her reaction?

19 A I think she was in agreement. She was receptive to the idea.

20 Q Do you remember what she said?

21 A I can't recall what she said exactly.

22 Q Okay. Did she say what she was going to do with the suggestion, if
23 anything?

24 A Not at that moment.

25 Q Later did she?

1 A Yes.

2 Q What happened?

3 A So --

4 Q Or is that, then, getting to later in time after the Pence tweet?

5 A Yeah, so after the Pence tweet.

6 Q Okay. So maybe we'll talk first about the Pence tweet.

7 A Okay.

8 Q And that is exhibit 4 --

9

BY [REDACTED]

10 Q So, at the time of the Pence tweet, Ms. Matthews, was it clear from the
11 television images that there was violence at the Capitol, that people had breached the
12 Capitol? Had that already occurred, that you could see on television, when you got the
13 alert on your phone and the Pence tweet came out?

14 A I can't recall exactly, but from what I think happened, was that they had
15 breached past the initial perimeter and they were at the Capitol, like, on the steps.

16 Q Yeah.

17 A And so, yeah, it was clear that it was escalating and escalating quickly.

18 And so, then, when that tweet, the Mike Pence tweet, was sent out, I remember
19 us saying that that was the last thing that needed to be tweeted at that moment. I said
20 that to Roma and Ben.

21

BY [REDACTED]

22 Q So we've heard from other witnesses that before the Pence tweet Ben
23 Williamson went and spoke to Mark Meadows. Do you know whether that's accurate?

24 A Yeah, I think that that sounds accurate. Because I think that Ben and I had
25 been sitting there, and I was like, I should go talk to Kayleigh, and he was like, I'm going to

1 go talk to Mark.

2 And so I think that was when, you know, I said something to Kayleigh about, you
3 know, something needed to be sent out by the President. And then Ben went to track
4 down Mark Meadows to relay that to him as well.

5 But then I remember that he came back and we were together when the Mike
6 Pence tweet was sent out.

7 Q And did Mr. Williamson say anything to you about what he said to Mark
8 Meadows?

9 A He didn't, I guess, tell me in detail what his recommendation was, but --

10 Q Did he say anything in general about it?

11 A I don't know what he said exactly.

12 Q Okay. Did he say anything before he went about why he was going to go
13 talk to Mark Meadows?

14 A I think that, yeah, we both just knew that something needed to be said.

15 Q Okay. By the President?

16 A By the President.

17 Q Okay.

18 And so then there's the tweet that's at tab 4. As you can see, it was January 6,
19 2021, at 2:24 p.m.

20 Is this what you thought needed to be tweeted by the President?

21 A No.

22 Q Okay.

23 The President tweeted, "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should
24 have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to
25 certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were

1 asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

2 Do you have any knowledge of how that tweet was prepared?

3 A No.

4 Q What was your reaction to the tweet?

5 A Like I mentioned, the situation was already bad, and so it felt like he was
6 pouring gasoline on the fire by tweeting that.

7 Q And did you have a conversation with anybody about that tweet?

8 A Ben Williamson and Roma Daravi and I all received the notification and read
9 the tweet at the same time, and I think it was verbalized that that was the last thing that
10 was needed in that moment. And then Ben said that he was going to go talk to
11 Meadows, and I said, I'm going to go find Kayleigh. And so then --

12 Q This is -- sorry, just so I understand, this is the second time he was going to
13 go see Meadows? Had he already seen Mr. Meadows before the tweet?

14 A I think.

15 Q Okay. It's fine. I mean, you can --

16 A I was gonna say, it's like --

17 Q -- only tell us what you recall.

18 A Yeah. I think. But --

19 Q Okay.

20 A -- I can't recall exactly how many times, you know, he went to Meadows and
21 when. But -- but, yes.

22 So, then, this tweet, I went to Kayleigh. We were talking in the press office, and I
23 said to her that the President needed to tweet something about the violence and needed
24 to tweet it immediately, and that my recommendation was that he needed to tweet
25 something about that the protestors needed to be peaceful and that there was no place

1 for violence and that -- I'm trying to think -- and -- be peaceful, no place for violence,
2 and -- sorry.

3 Q Was it anything about people should leave the Capitol or not?

4 A I didn't suggest that at that moment.

5 Q So, at that point, did you even know whether people had actually gotten
6 inside the Capitol?

7 A I don't think I knew at -- I was aware or not at that time.

8 Q Okay.

9 A Sorry. Hold on. Can I have one moment to think?

10 Q Yeah, of course.

11 A Okay.

12 Oh, I remember. The other suggestion that I had was -- so, like I said, stay
13 peaceful, no place for violence, and that we're the party of law and order and that, you
14 know, this is not how, you know, we should be behaving.

15 Q And how did Ms. McEnany respond?

16 A She seemed receptive. And so she said that she would go talk to the
17 President.

18 And so she went -- I'm not sure if it was in the Oval or -- there's a dining room just
19 off the Oval that he liked to spend time in. So wherever he was -- I think it was one of
20 those two places -- she walked over there. She went in, came back maybe 10 minutes
21 later, and basically told me that they were able to get him to agree to tweet something.

22 It was her -- there might've been others gathered in the room, but she shared with
23 me that it was definitely herself, Ivanka Trump, and Mark Meadows, and that they got
24 him to send a tweet, but at the end of the tweet he said, quote, "Stay peaceful."

25 And she said that he did not want to put that in and that they went through

1 different phrasing of that, of the mention of peace, in order to get him to agree to include
2 it, and that it was Ivanka Trump who came up with "stay peaceful" and that he agreed to
3 that phrasing to include in the tweet, but he was initially resistant to mentioning peace of
4 any sort.

5 Q Did she say anything more about what he said as far as why he didn't want
6 to ask people to be peaceful?

7 A No.

8 Q Okay. Did she say anything about what anybody else said in the meeting?

9 A No.

10 Q Okay.

11 If you'll look at exhibit 5, a tweet -- it doesn't have the time on it, but it was at 2:38
12 p.m. from Donald Trump. "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement.
13 They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!"

14 Is that the tweet you were referring to?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay. Do you know anything else, other than what you just told us, about
17 conversations related to preparation of that tweet?

18 A No.

19 [REDACTED] Do you have anything?

20

BY [REDACTED]

21 Q Did Ms. McEnany say anything about her own encouragement to the
22 President or Mr. Meadows with respect to the wording, particularly the "stay peaceful"
23 part of that tweet?

24 A Yeah. I think that they were in agreement with Ivanka on there needed to
25 be some sort of mention of peace and that they went through different, I think, phrasing

1 of that and that he settled on "stay peaceful" --

2 Q Okay.

3 A -- and agreed to include that.

4 Q So you got a sense from Ms. McEnany that all three of them kind of agreed,
5 "Hey, you need to say something about stay peaceful."

6 A Correct.

7 Q And did you hear anything else about the alternate phraseology that was
8 proposed or other words that may have been considered?

9 A No.

10 Q Okay. Thanks.

11 A Uh-huh.

12 BY [REDACTED]

13 Q Did Ms. McEnany describe in any way how resistant the President was to
14 including something about being peaceful?

15 A Just that he didn't want to include it, but they got him to agree on the
16 phrasing "stay peaceful."

17 Q Okay. Do you know whether he typed this up himself versus Dan Scavino
18 or somebody else sending it out?

19 A No, I don't.

20 Q Okay.

21 Okay. If you'll look at exhibit 6, it looks like the same tweet there being
22 retweeted by Ivanka Trump at 3:15 p.m. It says, "American Patriots - any security
23 breach or disrespect to our law enforcement is unacceptable. The violence must stop
24 immediately. Please be peaceful."

25 So this strikes me as a stronger statement. Now, admittedly, it's, you know, a

1 little more than a half an hour later. But, in addition to "please be peaceful," it says,
2 "The violence must stop immediately," something that the President didn't say.

3 Do you have any understanding as to why Ivanka Trump felt the need to send her
4 own tweet?

5 A No. I didn't speak to her that day.

6 Q Okay. Did Kayleigh McEnany or anybody else say anything to you about
7 this tweet?

8 A No.

9 Q Okay.

10 So what happened next? Kayleigh McEnany told you about that tweet that's at
11 exhibit 5, the conversation, I guess, she had about the preparation of that tweet. What
12 happened next?

13 A So then I think the images that we started to see unfold just continued to get
14 worse and --

15 Q In what way?

16 A I think they -- the rioters had actually breached the Capitol at that point
17 and --

18 Q And by "breach," you mean not the bike racks but the windows.

19 A Were in the building, yeah.

20 And so I went to her and said that -- if I recall that correctly. I'm not confident on
21 the timing of that, but I think that, if they hadn't breached yet, they might've been
22 breaking windows or something. But it escalated from the time that, you know, they
23 got him to send out the tweet with "stay peaceful" and when she came back.

24 And so then I relayed to her that I thought he needed to tweet again and that it
25 needed to have a forceful condemnation of the violence, because there was no

1 condemnation of the violence, and that I thought there needed to be a call to action, that
2 he needed to tell people to leave the Capitol.

3 Q Okay. And you said that to Kayleigh McEnany. Was anybody else there?

4 A So I think that -- there was a roomful of people there. But she was, again,
5 receptive to what I said and, I think, went back to the President, and then another tweet
6 was sent.

7 Q Okay. And is that tweet what you see at tab 7, just -- from Donald Trump.
8 Doesn't have the time on here, but it was at 3:13 p.m.

9 He wrote, "I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No
10 violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order -- respect the Law and our great
11 men and women in Blue. Thank you!"

12 A Correct.

13 Q Did Ms. McEnany tell you anything about her conversation with the
14 President about that tweet?

15 A No.

16 Q Okay. Did she say anything about who was in the room when she went
17 back in there?

18 A No.

19 Q Okay.

20 What was your reaction -- well, did you hear from anybody else about -- anything
21 about the preparation of that tweet?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay. What was your reaction to the tweet?

24 A I thought, again, it didn't meet the moment, because I thought there needed
25 to be a forceful condemnation of the violence that was already occurring and a call to

1 action. And so I relayed that message to Kayleigh again.

2 Q Do you know whether Ms. McEnany had conveyed that message to the
3 President before he issued this tweet?

4 A I'm not sure what her exact recommendation was, but she seemed receptive
5 to what I was saying. But I can't tell you exactly what the --

6 Q Okay.

7 A -- advice she gave him was.

8 Q So, then, when you talked to her about this 3:13 p.m. tweet, which is at
9 exhibit 7, what was her reaction? Ms. McEnany's reaction, that is.

10 A After I said that -- after this tweet where he said the --

11 Q Right.

12 A -- "WE are the Party of Law & Order"?

13 Q Yes.

14 A So, yes, so then I relayed again that I thought it needed to have a forceful
15 condemnation of the violence and that there needed to be a call to action to ask people
16 to leave the Capitol.

17 And it was in a room in the press office where others were gathered. And a
18 colleague of mine suggested that he not condemn the violence.

19 Q Who was that colleague?

20 A Chad Gilmartin.

21 Q Okay.

22 A There is a reasoning behind that, but --

23 Q Okay.

24 A His reasoning was that he felt like by -- condemning the violence
25 acknowledged that these were his supporters and that it would let the media, quote,

1 "win," end quote, because what he expressed was that, over the summer, we had seen
2 violent protests across the country by Black Lives Matter protestors and that Democrats
3 were never asked to condemn that violence. And so he thought that by the President
4 condemning, you know, what looked as if were his supporters causing violence that the
5 media would, quote, "win," end quote.

6 Q Okay.

7 A And I disagreed with that assessment.

8 Q What did you say?

9 A And I think at this point, too, there was a conversation of, "Well, it could be
10 antifa," you know.

11 Q Do you remember who said that?

12 A I don't remember if it was him or -- I can't recall. But I think that was
13 another thing that was being floated.

14 And so then I spoke up and suggested that it doesn't matter if it is antifa or not
15 because we should be condemning violence no matter what, no matter what side it's
16 coming from, and that if it comes out that these are antifa protestors posing as MAGA
17 supporters, then all the better that we condemned it, because we should just be
18 condemning violence, you know, whether it's coming from the left or the right, in my
19 opinion.

20 And so I conveyed that to Kayleigh, at which point Chad disagreed and, you know,
21 said that the media would win, in his eyes, if we did that and, because of what he thought
22 was hypocrisy by the media, you know, that Trump would be asked to condemn this but
23 Democrats weren't asked to condemn the Black Lives Matter protestors who caused
24 violence over the summer, to which I responded -- I pointed at the TV and said, I guess
25 yelled, "Do you think we're winning right now?"

1 And it was about at that moment I was very frustrated, I got emotional, and I
2 decided to walk away from that room. And I went down to the area called Lower Press,
3 which was down the hallway, where some of my other colleagues were seated.

4 Q Actually, I may have already asked you this, but I want to make sure I don't
5 miss it.

6 Going back to the first of these tweets about being peaceful, the one that was
7 exhibit 5, so this is the 2:38, and you said Ms. McEnany told you about her going into the
8 area around the Oval Office, whether it was the dining room or the Oval Office, and the
9 President's reluctance to say anything about being peaceful. When Ms. McEnany told
10 you that, was there anybody else there with you?

11 A There were others in the room, but I can't recall who exactly.

12 Q Okay.

13 A But she said it kind of directly to me.

14 Q To you. And you were in this --

15 A But there were others in earshot. We were sitting in Upper Press, and
16 there were other desks around, but --

17 Q Okay.

18 A -- it was kind of stated more to me directly.

19 Q Do you remember who else was in earshot?

20 A Potentially Chad Gilmartin. Maybe Jalen Drummond. Lindy Rose.

21 Q Okay. But you don't know whether --

22 A Maybe Ben Williamson.

23 Q You don't know whether anybody else heard it?

24 A No.

25 Q Okay. Did you have any conversations with anybody else about what

1 Ms. McEnany had told you?

2 A Not that I can recall.

3 Q Okay.

4 So what was Judd Deere's reaction to all of this, if you recall?

5 A So he sat down in Lower Press, so I didn't see him for, like, I guess the
6 majority of the day until I stormed out of Upper Press after that conversation between
7 Kayleigh, Chad, and myself. And when I went down to Lower --

8 Q Sorry. Before you get to that -- sorry to interrupt you, but I just want to
9 make sure I cover this.

10 So you said what Mr. Gilmartin said and what you said in response. Did Kayleigh
11 McEnany say anything in response to what Mr. Gilmartin said?

12 A No. I think she was just more listening.

13 Q Okay. All right. Sorry. You can continue then.

14 A No, you're good.

15 So then I went down to Lower Press, where some of our other colleagues were
16 seated, one of which was Judd, and we had a conversation about how, you know, that
17 this was not good, essentially. And then I think I said to him that I thought the -- I said
18 to him and, I think, others who were seated down there that I thought the President
19 wasn't meeting the moment.

20 And then I went and sat in Judd's office for a little bit. And it was at that time
21 when I was down there that a Secret Service agent popped in to let the press office know
22 that he was going to be -- the President was going to be recording a video.

23 Q Okay.

24 [REDACTED] So I'll pause now, before we turn to the video, to see if any members
25 have any questions on anything we've covered so far.

1 Yes, Mrs. Luria?

2 Mrs. Luria. All right. So I kind of wanted to go back to the beginning of the day
3 and then compare this day to other normal days in the press office.

4 I would assume, on a given day, you start out the day with a schedule, a plan.
5 Maybe there's some sort of briefing among the staff, okay, this is what we're going to
6 communicate about today, if there are any press releases or press appearances that are
7 going to be happening.

8 Would you -- first of all, was that a routine? Was there some sort of routine like
9 what I described? And, if so, what did you start out the day on January 6th with as your
10 plan?

11 And, then, were there things that you intended to do during the day that fell by
12 the wayside or were no longer executed or carried out because of the events that
13 unfolded?

14 The Witness. Yeah. No, that's a good question.

15 So I think that, typically, pre-election, that was how a lot of our days went, but
16 after the election, that there wasn't, I guess, much of a communications plan, because a
17 lot of what the President wanted to be talking about was in regards to the election. And
18 so we, you know, in our role at the White House, were not able to speak on it.

19 And so, you know, that kind of, I guess, prevented us from having, you know,
20 briefings or -- and there wasn't much policy that we were pushing. Because, obviously,
21 that was more of our role at the White House, was to be pushing different policies or
22 positions. And that kind of seemed to fall by the wayside because his focus became
23 entirely focused on the election.

24 And so, yeah, I guess, pre-election, though, that would've been the normal, sort
25 of, day-to-day routine, but then, post-election, it seemed to change.

1 And so, specifically on January 6th, I thought of it -- I didn't even think of it as, like,
2 oh, what message are we pushing today? I went into the day thinking, wow, this might
3 be the last Trump rally I'm ever going to see, at least with him as President. And so
4 there wasn't, I guess, any sort of, like, predetermined communications plan going into
5 that day.

6 Mrs. Luria. Okay.

7 And so you said he devoted the majority of his efforts as far as communications
8 to, you know, talking about the election after the election. But I would just assume, you
9 know, in the final days of an administration, that there would be a big push to highlight all
10 of the great accomplishments that have happened during that administration.

11 Did you guys have a plan where you, kind of, really -- did you have a focus on
12 trying to, sort of, frame how people remembered the accomplishments of the
13 administration? And, if so, did that either fall by the wayside or he wasn't interested in
14 it?

15 The Witness. Yes. So that was something that was communicated to him, that
16 he should be out there promoting his legacy. Different ideas were presented to him
17 about things he could highlight or tell, you know, different events or speeches, et cetera,
18 and he was disinterested in all of it.

19 Mrs. Luria. Were there other times when you worked at the White House that
20 similar things, similar events that were happening overshadowed the work you were
21 trying to do and it really -- was it most of the time just driven by him? Or did you guys
22 on a, sort of, routine basis, before the election and before this timeframe, were you the
23 main drivers of the communication?

24 The Witness. I think that it was a little bit of a combination of both. You know,
25 there were certainly plans that were laid and things that, you know, we wanted to, you

1 know, highlight, but then those plans could also get derailed occasionally by, you know,
2 the news cycle or potentially something the President said or tweeted.

3 So I guess there was a plan, but occasionally we would have to adapt to the
4 situation.

5 Mrs. Luria. Okay.

6 And you mentioned your conversations with Ms. McEnany and the fact that she
7 went in and talked to the President. And earlier on in the conversation, we were talking
8 to you about the process about how tweets were generally drafted and presented to the
9 President, you know, and that sometimes they'd come from the communications office if
10 there was a thought that there was, like, a real need to communicate something.

11 Do you recall or know on that day if any, like, direct language was presented to
12 the President? Or do you feel that your conversations were more just about the tone
13 and content of the tweets that needed to go out?

14 The Witness. Yeah. I think, you know, typically, when tweets were presented
15 to him, they were written out so he could see them, and printed and shown him. But I
16 don't recall Kayleigh printing anything that day. I think that she went to him just -- I
17 don't think there was time for that.

18 And so I think she went to him, you know, directly and communicated that he
19 needed to, you know, tweet something and address the situation that was unfolding.
20 And I can't -- I can tell you what I recommended her to say to him, but I'm not sure what
21 her exact recommendation was to him.

22 Mrs. Luria. Okay.

23 And I assume, you know, throughout this, while you're having in-person
24 conversations with the people in the room, you're also hearing a lot of things from
25 outside. You have a lot of connections with, you know, reporters and different people in

1 government from your time on the Hill. What kind of communications were incoming to
2 you that you recall that were notable on that day?

3 The Witness. So mainly the reporters that were -- I was talking to were in
4 person. Because, as I mentioned, they could come and walk back to my desk at any
5 time, and so, you know, if I don't text them back or email them back, they could come
6 find me.

7 So I did -- I can't recall -- I'm sure I got plenty of emails and texts that day from
8 reporters, as well, asking for what the President was doing, if he was going to make a
9 statement on the violence that was unfolding. But, as I mentioned, we were not
10 allowed to talk about it.

11 And so I think that -- I think I may have told reporters off the record that, you
12 know, a statement was coming from him, or a tweet was coming, just to kind of, you
13 know, tell them to keep an eye on that.

14 But I didn't, I guess, try to engage too much about what my, you know, personal
15 position was about what was happening. Just tried to keep them updated on, you
16 know, updates from the White House.

17 Mrs. Luria. So did you feel uncomfortable personally? Like, the fact that you're
18 watching this on TV, you can see the violence, you personally have told her that you felt
19 something stronger should be said, but reporters were coming to you and you were
20 essentially just saying "no comment" or "keep an eye out for a statement later." Like,
21 how did that make you feel, like, in the role that you were supposed to be speaking for
22 the White House?

23 The Witness. Yeah. I think that that started to make me feel uncomfortable.
24 Because I can recall texting some reporters back, especially after the video -- he said, you
25 know, the "we love you, you're very special." And I remember a specific reporter asking

1 me about that line and trying to defend it off the record. And I was just -- I remember
2 thinking to myself, "What are you doing? Like, this is indefensible."

3 And so I think, yeah, I -- and I was definitely -- yeah, I mean, the events, like,
4 leading up to that moment, I was upset that, you know, I was being asked by reporters,
5 you know, to comment on air, you know, even some of them trying to engage me, you
6 know, off the record, because we had relationships, of, you know, how I was feeling
7 about it. And I think I was clearly distraught and -- but, obviously, was prevented from
8 really saying anything to them.

9 And then, yeah, I think when that video was tweeted out, that was kind of the
10 breaking point for me, because it felt, like, in my role as a spokesperson, indefensible.

11 Mrs. Luria. And what about language -- like, I made a note here. We were
12 talking about the text that went out at 3:15, which I think is in exhibit 6, and this was the
13 text from Ivanka -- like, just even using the words "American Patriots." Like, did you
14 feel, as spokesperson for the White House, that it was appropriate to be calling people
15 doing the things you were watching on TV "patriots" at that moment in time?

16 The Witness. No, I didn't think it was appropriate.

17 Mrs. Luria. Okay.

18 I don't have any other questions right now. Thank you.

19 [REDACTED] Okay.

20 Do any other members have questions?

21 Okay.

22 Do you have a question?

23 [REDACTED] Yeah, just a couple things.

24 BY [REDACTED]

25 Q Ms. Matthews, I want to go back to the conversation with Chad Gilmartin.

1 What was his specific position in the press office?

2 A He was the principal assistant press secretary. So the structure of the
3 comms team was, there was press secretary, three deputy press secretaries -- I was one
4 of them -- and then four assistant press secretaries. But I guess Chad was elevated
5 because he was the principal assistant press secretary. And then we had three press
6 assistants below that.

7 Q I see. So he was on the level beneath you as a principal assistant press
8 secretary.

9 A Correct.

10 Q So, in terms of the hierarchy, McEnany is sort of the head of this operation.
11 You're one of three of her immediate deputies?

12 A Uh-huh.

13 Q And then -- and, sorry, you have to say "yes" or "no."

14 A Oh. Yes.

15 Q And then under you, Ms. Matthews, is Chad Gilmartin and three -- two or
16 three other assistant press secretaries.

17 A Correct.

18 Q So, in the conversation that you describe where Mr. Gilmartin is talking
19 about "the media will win," he is underneath you in the hierarchy. Is that right?

20 A Correct.

21 Q Okay. Is it just the three of you present -- you, Gilmartin, and McEnany?

22 A I believe Jalen Drummond, who was an assistant press secretary, might have
23 been present, and potentially Lindy Rose. Lindy Rose was Kayleigh's assistant.

24 Q Sort of her administrative assistant?

25 A Correct.

1 Q Like, answering phones --

2 A Like, her scheduler.

3 Q Gotcha. Okay.

4 And did anyone else besides Chad Gilmartin express that perspective or anything
5 similar to that perspective of, hey, the Democrats didn't have to condemn BLM; they'll
6 win if he condemns violence?

7 A No, no one in that room, I guess, conveyed that same sentiment, as far as I
8 was aware.

9 Q I'm getting the sense that it was, kind of, Mr. Gilmartin said this and you
10 disagreed, and it was, sort of, the two of you have this argument, this disagreement.
11 But no one else is on either side? Is that right?

12 A Correct.

13 Q Ms. McEnany, she's the boss, right?

14 A Uh-huh.

15 Q What's her reaction as this unfolds?

16 A She was just more observing and listening, I think, at that point and just kind
17 of listening to both of our perspectives.

18 I would say that Chad and I were two of the people that she listened to the advice
19 of the most in the office --

20 Q Uh-huh.

21 A -- and so we both had very close relationships with her.

22 Q Uh-huh.

23 A So I think she was just listening to both of our points of view.

24 Q Did she say anything during this back-and-forth between you and Mr.
25 Gilmartin?

1 A Not that I can recall.

2 Q Ask a question? Make an observation? Say "uh-huh," "yes," anything like
3 that?

4 A She might have, to be honest, but I think I was so heated in that moment
5 that I can't really recall what her exact reaction was.

6 Q Okay.

7 A But from what I recall, it was more just her, kind of, taking in everything we
8 were both saying.

9 Q All right.

10 And did you get a sense at any point that it resolved, like, that one perspective
11 won and the other did not? You storm out and say, "Hey, does this look like we're
12 winning" --

13 A Uh-huh.

14 Q -- and leave, but did that end it? Or did you get a sense of resolution?

15 A So, no, I don't think there was much sense of resolution, from what I
16 gathered.

17 And I guess it wasn't a, you know, dramatic storm-out exit, but I think just, like, I
18 just kind of removed myself from that situation, where I thought, okay, I just need to walk
19 into a different room, talk to other people, and calm down a bit.

20 And so -- but, yeah, so I'm not sure, yeah, what, I guess, she did with that info
21 after that conversation, but I did not -- yeah. So I'm not sure.

22 Q Okay. So you don't know whether or not Ms. McEnany sort of picked a side
23 or agreed with either you or Mr. Gilmartin ultimately?

24 A Correct. But I do think that she was -- it was clear to me just that she was
25 visibly shaken by what was happening --

1 Q Yeah.

2 A -- and that she knew it was bad too.

3 Q Separate from that conversation, was there anyone else inside the White
4 House that day that expressed a similar perspective as Mr. Gilmartin, that, hey, we
5 shouldn't -- we can't condemn violence or the media will win, or push back against what
6 you -- your perspective?

7 A No, not that I'm aware of.

8 Q Not just in the press office, but in the chief of staff's office or any other part
9 of the White House staff?

10 A Yeah, not that I'm aware of.

11 Q Okay.

12 Is Mr. Gilmartin personally close to Ms. McEnany? Does he babysit for her
13 daughter or spend time with her family, something along those lines?

14 A They are related. He is the cousin of her husband --

15 Q Uh-huh.

16 A -- and, yes, spent a lot of time with her family.

17 Q Okay. Fair to say closest, outside of the office, to her than anyone else in
18 the --

19 A Yes.

20 Q -- White House?

21 A Yes.

22 Q And does that continue to this day, as far as you know?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay.

25 You mentioned earlier also that you were told early in the day not to say anything,

1 right, that that came to you from Ms. McEnany, who indicated that Mr. Meadows had
2 directed that? Is that right?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Did you ever push back at that and say, "Hey, we've got to say something,"
5 or, "I'm getting these calls from the reporters; can we engage?"

6 A I think I didn't ask for myself to engage necessarily, but just that it was more
7 me saying that the President needed to be out there saying something.

8 Q Okay.

9 A And so that was the recommendation I kept giving throughout the day.

10 Q Uh-huh.

11 A And then -- but I did mention to her that we were getting bombarded with
12 media requests.

13 Q Understandably. Did you feel hamstrung or somehow prevented from
14 doing your job because of that early directive that you not have a comment?

15 A Yeah, I mean, I guess I thought that -- it felt strange for us to go radio silent
16 in that moment. And so it felt like, yes, we needed to be out there saying something,
17 more specifically the President himself. And so, yes, it did feel strange to go radio silent.

18 Q Okay. And, given that it felt strange, again, did you, Ms. Matthews, ever
19 say to Kayleigh or anyone else, "We're getting bombarded. Can I, even off the record,
20 say something?" Like, did you seek permission to respond, yourself, more forcefully
21 when you got these inquiries?

22 A No, I don't think I asked permission. But, like I mentioned, I think I just told
23 reporters off the record that, you know, a statement is coming, a tweet is coming --

24 Q Okay.

25 A -- a video is coming. And so it was more of, that's what I had just decided

1 to do.

2 Q I understand.

3 So the directive that "we shouldn't comment," did that cover off-the-record
4 communications? In your view, could you not talk to a reporter with whom you had a
5 relationship, not for attributions but off the record? Would that have violated this
6 directive that you got not to say anything?

7 A I don't think so. I think it was more just, like, publicly.

8 Q I see. Okay. So you could still talk to reporters that you knew, trusted.

9 A Correct.

10 Q Just couldn't go on the record or say anything for --

11 A Correct.

12 Q Okay.

13 A And I think most of my interactions that day with reporters were for
14 planning purposes --

15 Q Yeah.

16 A -- of, "Hey, there's going to be a video coming," that kind of thing.

17 Q Got it. Okay.

18

BY [REDACTED]

19 Q And your recommendation that the President say something more forceful,
20 was that at all because you thought that doing so might actually have an effect on what
21 was happening at the Capitol?

22 A Correct. I thought that he was the only person who could maybe get them
23 to leave.

24 [REDACTED] We've been going for a while. Do you want to take a break or --

25 Mr. Belevetz. Sure.

1 [REDACTED] -- keep going?

2 Mr. Belevetz. Yeah.

3 [REDACTED] Take a break? Do you want to do 5 minutes? Ten minutes?

4 Mr. Belevetz. Five should be good.

5 The Witness. Yeah.

6 [REDACTED] Okay. Five minutes. So we'll go off the record.

7 [Recess.]

8 [REDACTED] Okay. We'll go back on the record.

9 BY [REDACTED]

10 Q Ms. Matthews, I had just a few questions to follow up what we were
11 discussing before the break.

12 I was struck by how you said you went to Ms. McEnany a few times on January 6th
13 to provide her your thoughts about what you thought President Trump should tweet and,
14 afterwards, your understanding is she went and she talked to President Trump to convey
15 some sort of advice.

16 Were you concerned that if you did not share your thoughts about what you
17 thought President Trump should be tweeting that no one would be providing him that
18 advice?

19 A No, I had faith that I thought that Kayleigh was in similar -- a similar mindset
20 to me. But I wanted to make it explicitly clear what I thought needed to be said.
21 Because, like, as I mentioned, I had specific things that I thought needed to be said in his
22 tweets.

23 Q Okay.

24 What about others around President Trump besides, you know, Ms. McEnany,
25 what advice they would provide, did you have, like, similar faith?

1 A I think a majority of the staff, yes.

2 Q Okay.

3 A Yeah.

4 Q Could you explain a little bit more what you mean by that?

5 A I think it was clear the atmosphere in the White House was generally that
6 people were disturbed by what was happening.

7 Q Okay. And what gave you that impression?

8 A That people were just in shock and kind of, like, silently sitting there
9 watching the coverage and watching the attack unfold.

10 Q So seriously disturbed on January 6th, what was happening?

11 A Correct.

12 Q Could you just describe a little bit more the atmosphere? Was it, you
13 know, the whole press shop, you all were in a room watching TV? People were in their
14 office -- and, excuse me, I don't know how the White House is set up, but people were in
15 their different offices watching TV? From, you know, your vantage point, what was the
16 atmosphere like? What were people doing?

17 A Yeah. So there are two different, I guess, press offices, and there are
18 multiple TVs everywhere within those offices. And people were sitting there just
19 watching the coverage unfold and -- yeah. And I was sitting in the Upper Press most of
20 the day.

21 Q Okay.

22 And I know you mentioned earlier that you saw the events unfold -- or as it was
23 unfolding on TV. Do you recall if the TV was already on and you looked up and you saw
24 it? Or was there, like, some sort of notification on your phone that, you know,
25 prompted someone to turn on the TV?

1 A No, the TVs were always on.

2 Q Okay. So, to the best of your recollection, you might've -- the TV was
3 already on, and that's when you saw what was happening at the Capitol?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay.

6 And I know you mentioned you had several conversations with members of the
7 White House press shop that day. Did you have any conversations with anyone from
8 Vice President Pence's staff on the 6th?

9 A I did not.

10 Q Would you normally interact with them as part of your duties?

11 A If it was relevant, yes.

12 Q So, to your knowledge, were there any conversations with Vice President
13 Pence's shop about what messages should be put out as the attack was unfolding?

14 A I did not have any, I guess, direct interactions with them, so, to my
15 knowledge, no.

16 Q Okay.

17 That's it for me. Thank you.

18 [REDACTED] Great. And can we go off the record for just a moment?

19 [Discussion off the record.]

20 [REDACTED] Okay. We'll go back on the record.

21

BY [REDACTED]

22 Q Okay. Ms. Matthews, I'm going to ask you in a moment to resume the
23 chronology, which was -- I think where we left off was you saying that a Secret Service
24 agent had said that the President was going to do the video statement from the Rose
25 Garden.

1 But before we do that, just to try and keep things roughly chronological, if you
2 look at exhibit 12, this appears to be a text message or series of messages between you
3 and somebody named Alyssa, and it says "A.F." I assume that's Alyssa Farah. Is that
4 correct?

5 A Correct.

6 Q And who is Alyssa Farah?

7 A Alyssa Farah was the former White House communications director.

8 Q And on January 6, 2021, was she still working in the government?

9 A No.

10 Q Okay. Do you know roughly when she left?

11 A I think mid-December.

12 Q Okay. So you overlapped.

13 A Yes.

14 Q Okay.

15 So I don't know if there's anything before 4:08 in this chain. If so, I assume it's
16 not relevant. So the first one here chronologically on the page appears to be at
17 4:08 p.m., and it appears to be from you to Ms. Farah.

18 What prompted you to send the text message to Ms. Farah?

19 A Alyssa and I were very tight during our time at the White House. And we
20 weren't just colleagues, we were very good friends. And I looked to her as, like, a
21 mentor. And so I knew that we held similar beliefs oftentimes on things, and I felt that
22 she would feel the same way I did about what was transpiring. So I sent her a text.

23 Q Okay.

24 So, at 4:08 -- let's just, to put this in the chronology -- is, I think, something like
25 9 minutes before the President's statement, video statement, was released. So I don't

1 know if you recall whether this was before or after the Secret Service agent told you that
2 the President was going to the Rose Garden.

3 A I think it would've been after.

4 Q Okay. But presumably shortly after. Is that right?

5 A I'm actually not sure.

6 Q Okay.

7 So, just to keep things chronological, I'll ask about what the Secret Service agent
8 said to you, and then we'll come back to the texts. Tell us what the Secret Service agent
9 said.

10 A He didn't say it to me, but I was in earshot of it. He walked in to tell one of
11 the press assistants -- I believe it was Margo Martin -- that the President was going to be
12 doing an on-camera video in the Rose Garden, which was something normal for them to
13 come in and notify the press team of.

14 And so that was how I knew then that, you know, he was going to be doing an
15 on-camera appearance.

16 Q Okay. And do you know what prompted him to do the on-camera
17 appearance?

18 A I'm not sure. I assume that he was being advised to do it, though.

19 Q Okay. So you don't have any personal knowledge.

20 A No.

21 Q Okay. Do you know who went with him?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay. Do you know who was involved in drafting his remarks?

24 A No.

25 Q Okay. But you were not?

1 A No.

2 Q Okay.

3 So what happened after you heard that from the Secret Service agent?

4 A Then we knew that the video was being filmed and then uploaded to
5 Twitter. And so then I was down in that area called Lower Press and was sitting there
6 with my colleague Judd Deere when it was tweeted out.

7 Q Okay.

8 A And that's how we knew it was being sent out. We were not involved in
9 the filming or anything of it.

10 Q Okay. So at some point roughly in that chronology you sent the text to Ms.
11 Farah --

12 A Yes.

13 Q -- at 4:08.

14 BY [REDACTED]

15 Q And before you leave that, is the Lower Press area where the briefing room
16 is adjacent to the Rose Garden, essentially, like, right in the same small area?

17 A Yes. So, basically, when there's a press briefing and the door that the, you
18 know, press secretary walks through to enter the room, that door leads directly into
19 Lower Press. And then there's the briefing room.

20 Q Uh-huh.

21 A And then behind the briefing room are all the offices for the media. They
22 have desks back there. And so they work from there. But, like I said, they have access
23 to walk through the briefing room to Lower Press.

24 And then, when you exit Lower Press, there is -- if you exit the door to Lower
25 Press, to your left is the door to go out to the Rose Garden -- or a door to go out to the

1 Rose Garden. And then to your right is a ramp. And if you go up the ramp, it would
2 lead you to Upper Press. And --

3 Q So when this --

4 A Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

5 Q No, I'm sorry. You --

6 A And if you go up that ramp, then you can either turn right and go to Upper
7 Press or you can go straight, and that hallway takes you down to where the Oval is.

8 Q Okay. I'm just trying to get a sense of, the Secret Service is letting you
9 know about the President's anticipated movement because it's, sort of, close to your
10 workspace? Is that right?

11 A Yes. I think because, as I mentioned earlier, the media can walk, like,
12 through those areas, and so -- and they usually are able to see the Rose Garden. And so,
13 if there was going to be a filming of a video there, the media could potentially see that.
14 And so they were kind of doing it, I think, as more of a heads-up on his movements so
15 that we would be aware.

16 Q I see. And were any steps taken to make sure the Rose Garden was secure
17 or the press or anyone else couldn't get into it during the President's presence there
18 filming this video?

19 A Not that I'm aware.

20 Q Okay.

21 All right. That's all. Thanks.

22

BY 

23 Q Could you see the President when the video was being filmed?

24 A No. I didn't try to, so --

25 Q Okay.

1 So, if we turn back to the text, 4:08 p.m., you wrote to Ms. Farah, "I'm sick to my
2 stomach, Alyssa, and absolutely horrified what is going on. POTUS is supposed to do an
3 on-camera statement, but no idea what he's planning to say/if it'll be strong enough.
4 Sorry, I just need to vent. This is to someone who I know is rational-thinking and sees
5 things the way I do. Ugh."

6 So what prompted you to write that?

7 A I think that I felt frustrated because I felt like he was continually not meeting
8 the moment.

9 Q Okay.

10 A And so I was concerned that, even though I knew an on-camera statement
11 was coming, I didn't think that, again, it would meet the moment of what needed to be
12 said.

13 Q And was that based on any knowledge of what he was going to say or just
14 purely based on what had transpired up until that point?

15 A Yeah, just purely based on what had transpired.

16 Q And by that, does that mean his previous tweets or also things you had
17 heard about his reluctance to make a more aggressive statement?

18 A I think a combination of both, just the tweets and then knowing that there
19 was reluctance with that first initial tweet with the mention of "stay peaceful."

20 Q Did you have any knowledge of the President's reluctance other than that
21 one episode that you've already told us about?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay.

24 So, then, Ms. Farah responded. Can you tell on your phone what time she wrote
25 back?

1 A Yes. She wrote back at 4:09 and sent those two messages that you see.

2 Q Okay.

3 And she wrote, "Thinking about you. This is heartbreaking and terrifying. My
4 only advice would be to give the best counsel you can," and then an emoji. "I know Ben
5 is feeling the same way. He just seems detached from how serious this." And then the
6 next tweet is, "Someone is going to get hurt."

7 [REDACTED] Text. You said tweet.

8 [REDACTED] Did I say tweet? I'm sorry. Thank you. A text.

9 BY [REDACTED]

10 Q So this largely speaks for itself. I assume "Ben" is Ben Williamson. Is that
11 your understanding?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And did she ever tell you how she knew that Ben Williamson was feeling the
14 same way?

15 A She did not.

16 Q Okay. But was it your understanding that Ben Williamson was feeling the
17 same way?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay.

20 And then she wrote, "He just seems detached from how serious this is." What
21 did you understand that to mean?

22 A If I had to speculate, I think probably just that he was maybe in shock, and I
23 think when people are in shock, sometimes they don't understand the gravity of the
24 situation.

1 [12:07 p.m.]

2

BY [REDACTED]

3 Q Okay. You think he there refers to Mr. Williamson?

4 A That's what I would assume based on reading that, but I'm not sure.

5 Q Got it. Okay. And then you wrote back, thank you.

6 Do you know what time that was?

7 A Actually, is it okay if we go back to your previous question?

8 Q Yes. Of course.

9 A I think there's -- re-reading that, I think there's a chance she could have been
10 referring to POTUS.

11 Q Okay.

12 A So I don't know if I can definitively say whether or not she was referring to
13 Ben or to President Trump because I had conversations with Ben, and he was disturbed
14 by what was happening.

15 Q Okay. So you think if this was referring to Ben Williamson, it's not
16 consistent with your understanding of how Ben Williamson was treating the situation?

17 A Correct. If I had to guess, if it was referring to Ben, like I said, I think it
18 would be maybe that he was in shock, and that's what she meant by it. But I cannot
19 definitively say who I think she was referring to in that text.

20 Q If it was referring to the President, was the statement that the President just
21 seems detached from how serious this, presuming this is, consistent with your
22 understanding of the President's reaction?

23 A Yes. Based on what I shared with the peaceful tweet, I felt like he might
24 not understand the gravity of the situation.

25 Q Okay. And then when you wrote back with a text starting with "thank you,"

1 what time was that?

2 A 4:12.

3 Q Okay. So 4:12. So, again, still before the President's video statement was
4 released, you wrote, "thank you," it looks like two emojis of prayer hands. Ben, Roma,
5 and I are just sitting in a room together at a loss for words at what is happening. I know
6 Ben is pushing Meadows, and I've been pushing Kayleigh about the need for a stronger
7 condemnation, so hopefully he does that in the video.

8 So, first, on the Ben is pushing Meadows, what did you mean by that?

9 A I knew that Ben and I had had conversations about him wanting to talk to
10 Meadows to have Meadows talk to the President, and then I was going to do the same in
11 regard to Kayleigh.

12 Q Okay. And then Ms. Farah wrote back. "Wish I could be there with you
13 guys, this is so scary, have so many people I care about inside, and it's only going to get
14 worse at night, I worry." And then you wrote back, "Wish you were here too. I'm so
15 terrified for everyone at the Capitol and for what's going to happen when it gets dark."

16 What time was that tweet -- I'm sorry -- that text that she sent?

17 A Alyssa's was sent at 4:14 p.m., and mine was sent at 4:15 p.m.

18 Q Okay. And then why were you concerned about what would happen when
19 it got dark?

20 A I think because over the summer, we had seen violence at the White House
21 during the Republican National Convention when they hosted it at the White House.
22 And things got really ugly when people were trying to leave the White House grounds
23 because there were crowds of people. And so, I was concerned about the safety of the
24 staff and lawmakers who were at the Capitol, and them trying to leave the premises.

25 Q Okay. And then Ms. Farah wrote back, "Be safe. This is the worst," "Any

1 idea what Mark is thinking? I've been trying to reach him."

2 Do you know what time those texts were sent?

3 A Yes. The be safe text was sent at 4:30, and the text about Mark was 4:31.

4 Q Okay. So those were a few minutes after the President's statement, video
5 statement, that is. And when she wrote, "Any idea what Mark is thinking," did you
6 understand that to refer to Mark Meadows?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And what do you think she meant by that, any idea what Mark is thinking?

9 A I think just on how he was reacting to the events that were unfolding.

10 Q Did you interpret this as her suggesting that Mark was not -- Mark, meaning
11 Mark Meadows, was not doing enough?

12 A I think I interpreted it as she just did not know his thinking because she had
13 not been in touch with him.

14 Q Okay. She said, I've been trying to reach him. Do you know, did she tell
15 you ever whether she eventually reached him that day?

16 A No.

17 Q Okay. Meaning no, she didn't tell you, as opposed to no, she didn't?

18 A No. She didn't tell me, correct.

19 Q Okay. Then you wrote, "I haven't talked to Ben or seen him for like
20 20 minutes. Think he's with Mark."

21 What time was that text?

22 A 4:32, and the next two messages were also sent at 4:32.

23 Q Great. And so the next ones are, "I'll keep you posted," and "I told Ben
24 Mark should tweet too."

25 Okay. So the first one where it says, "I haven't talked to Ben or seen him for like

1 20 minutes. Think he's with Mark." Do you know if Ben Williamson was also with the
2 President?

3 A I'm not aware of that.

4 Q Okay. But this would have been roughly the timeframe when the filming of
5 the video statement would have occurred, correct?

6 A Yeah. I think it was around that time.

7 Q Okay. But you don't know whether Ben Williamson went to the Rose
8 Garden for the filming?

9 A No. I'm not sure.

10 Q You said, "think he's with Mark." What made you think he was with Mark
11 Meadows?

12 A I think just because we had had a conversation about, like, wanting to talk to
13 our direct bosses about the need for the President to, you know, say certain things. And
14 I hadn't seen him, so I assumed he was with Mark.

15 Q Okay. And you've already told us -- have you already told us everything
16 you recall about that conversation where you and Mr. Williamson said you were going to
17 talk to your respective bosses?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. And then it said -- the last one here is, "I told Ben Mark should tweet
20 too."

21 Can you tell us what you recall about that conversation with Mr. Williamson?

22 A I don't recall what exactly I said that Mark Meadows should tweet, but I
23 think I must have just said that it was important, probably, for other senior members of
24 the White House to be out there condemning the violence as well.

25 Q And do you know whether Mark Meadows did end up tweeting?

1 A I can't recall if he did tweet something.

2 Q Okay. So then, did you learn anything other than what you've already told
3 us about the video statement before you saw it?

4 A No.

5 Q Okay. And how did you learn that the video statement had come out?

6 A When I got the tweet notification.

7 Q Okay. And we'll go ahead and -- and do you remember, roughly, when that
8 was? I mean, it would have been -- in other words, were you getting the President's
9 tweets, and so, did you learn about it --

10 A Yeah.

11 Q -- basically as soon as it was --

12 A Correct.

13 Q -- public? Okay. So -- and the time, as we understand it, was 4:17, I think,
14 p.m. when the tweet was issued. So why don't we go ahead and play it.

15 [Video shown.]

16 BY [REDACTED]

17 Q What was your reaction when you saw the video statement?

18 A I was bothered that it started with talking about the election. Then as it
19 went further into the video, I felt a little sense of relief that there was finally some sort of
20 call to action where he said, you know, Go home. Go home in peace. But then the we
21 love you, you're very special, at the end really bothered me.

22 Q Why did it bother you?

23 A I think I mentioned this previously, but that I felt like there wasn't a
24 distinction between those that were peacefully protesting versus those that were causing
25 violence.

1 Q Did you ever, even after the fact, hear about whether there were any
2 disagreements about what the President should say or the President in any way being
3 reluctant to say anything in that video statement?

4 A No. I was not privy to any information regarding that, the filming of the
5 video or any remarks leading up to it.

6 Q And you don't know who was with him during the filming?

7 A No.

8 By [REDACTED]

9 Q Did you hear anything after the fact, Ms. Matthews, about any disagreement
10 over the words to be used in the video?

11 A No.

12 Q You described earlier some back and forth about language in a tweet that
13 you got I think from Ms. McEnany. Did you get anything similar, sort of a readout after
14 the fact about how he ultimately arrived at those words versus others?

15 A I did not.

16 Q Okay. Thanks.

17 BY [REDACTED]

18 Q Did you ever hear whether there were multiple takes of the video or if he did
19 it on the first take?

20 A I saw that in press reportings, but I was not told, I guess, that day or in the
21 days following about it.

22 Q Okay. Did you discuss the press reporting with anybody who would have
23 knowledge as to the accuracy of the press reporting?

24 A No.

25 [REDACTED] Okay. I'll pause. Do any members have any questions?

1

BY [REDACTED]

2

Q Ms. Matthews, do you know if there was any editing done to the statement?

3

A The video?

4

Q The video. Excuse me. Yes, the video.

5

A No. I'm not aware.

6

Q If any -- is there a place in the White House where videos would be edited,

7

or any person who would be responsible for that?

8

A My guess would be the digital team.

9

Q Okay. So there's a digital team separate from your communications team?

10

A Correct.

11

Q Who was on the digital team that you recall?

12

A Well, like, Dan Scavino -- his title obviously was Deputy Chief of Staff for

13

Communications, but he -- you know, his background was from digital, so he did kind of

14

oversee that team. And then they had multiple other people on that team, but I only

15

ever interfaced with -- I believe her name was Kate Carnes (ph).

16

Q Okay.

17

A I might be getting that last name incorrect or pronouncing it incorrect. It's

18

something like that.

19

Q Yeah.

20

A But Kate was the only other person from the digital team that I ever really

21

spoke to.

22

Q And, generally, what did digital do versus what communications and your

23

team did?

24

A Yeah. So they operated the different social media channels. You know,

25

when you would think of Twitter, for example @POTUS, @WhiteHouse, things of that

1 nature, and they also did, you know, filming of videos that he would do, and things like
2 that.

3 Q Got it. So you guys were more sort of focused on traditional media,
4 networks, print journalists, that sort of thing. They were focused more on sort of
5 messaging through social media or audio-visual type stuff --

6 A Correct.

7 Q -- generally? Okay. And did you hear anything specifically about who
8 filmed that, who edited it, who may have been involved in its production? I'm talking
9 that about the video statement from 4:17 on January 6th.

10 A No.

11 Q Okay. Thanks.

12 BY [REDACTED]

13 Q If you look at Exhibit --

14 [REDACTED] Mrs. Luria.

15 [REDACTED] Mrs. Luria, do you have questions?

16 Mrs. Luria. Yes.

17 I had a question about the synchronization of those two teams, because I would
18 assume you'd have -- you'd want to have a unified message. You know, you're doing
19 some of the traditional coms, and they're doing the digital with their person. Was there
20 a key link between the two teams to make sure that you were communicating the same
21 message?

22 Ms. Matthews. I don't know if there was a person that I would designate as the
23 key link. I don't think so.

24 Mrs. Luria. So it was more just informal or, like, watching what each other was
25 doing to make sure you were echoing each other's message?

1 Ms. Matthews. I think --

2 Mrs. Luria. There was nothing like between Scavino and McEnany at that level to
3 be on the same page?

4 Ms. Matthews. Yeah. I think there were -- you know, if there was a rollout for,
5 say, a policy or initiative or an event or something, there would be, you know, meetings
6 prior between the press team, the digital team, the communications team that would
7 take place, and there would be some sort of planning but -- about what the messaging
8 was but not on this day.

9 Mrs. Luria. Okay. So in a general rapid response type event, which I would
10 assume there were other things that kind of happened rapidly and weren't planned like a
11 natural disaster, some particular thing that was not planned in the news cycle that you
12 would respond to on the day of in a quick manner, were there communications that
13 happened on this day and how you coordinated inside the White House in between those
14 two teams similar to previous times when something happened, you know, that needed
15 to be responded to immediately, or were they very different? Was this normal, kind of
16 what was happening that day as far as, like, how there was kind of -- it seems to me, and
17 this is my word, no one in charge, no one taking the lead. It was all just kind of trying to
18 pressure one person, the former President, to make a comment?

19 Ms. Matthews. Yeah. I think that this day seemed a little bit more haphazard
20 than usual in terms of trying to get -- the main focus was trying to get the President to put
21 out, you know, a tweet or a video rather than it being, you know, maybe on a normal day,
22 a typical coordinated effort of, you know, different senior members of the White House,
23 you know, tweeting out things in a unified way, if that makes sense.

24 Mrs. Luria. Yes. Would you say that's because those people were not unified,
25 or the message from the top wasn't clear.

1 Ms. Matthews. No. I think that the entirety of the focus was just on that the
2 President needed to be the person out there, that his voice was the only one that
3 mattered in that moment. That would -- that was my assumption.

4 Mrs. Luria. Okay. Thank you.

5 Ms. Matthews. Yep.

6

BY [REDACTED]

7 Q If you could look at exhibit 8. These are text messages that you're not on
8 between Kayleigh McEnany and Jason Miller. It looks like it's just shortly before 4:30
9 p.m. on the 6th. Jason Miller wrote to Ms. McEnany, "Call me crazy, but ideas for two
10 tweets from POTUS. First is bad apples, likely antifa or other crazed leftists infiltrated
11 today's peaceful protest over the fraudulent vote count. Violence is never acceptable,
12 exclamation point. MAGA supporters embrace our police and the rule of law and should
13 leave the Capitol now, exclamation point."

14 Was this idea, whether this text itself or the idea, ever shared with you?

15 A No.

16 Q Okay. You did make reference earlier to somebody, possibly Ms. McEnany,
17 suggesting that antifa could be involved. Did you hear anything about Jason Miller
18 having suggested antifa could be involved?

19 A No.

20 Q And it says here in the last part that I read, it ended with "should leave the
21 Capitol now, exclamation point."

22 Did anybody mention to you that Jason Miller was pushing for the President to say
23 that the -- his supporters should leave the Capitol now?

24 A No.

25 Q All right. If you look -- well, actually, let's just continue, then. So after the

1 statement, you saw the statement. What happened -- the video statement, that is.

2 What happened next?

3 A So I watched the video statement with my colleague, Judd Deere, and
4 was -- I did not think that the video said what it needed to say and was upset by it. And
5 then I think I just chatted with some colleagues downstairs. I eventually made my way
6 back.

7 Q Do you remember which colleagues?

8 A Judd. Maybe some others.

9 Q Do you remember what their reactions were to the video?

10 A Judd seemed to have a similar reaction to me.

11 Q Okay. Do you remember anybody else's reaction?

12 A I don't think I asked anyone else their reaction. And then I think I had
13 popped up between Lower Press and Upper Press a couple times during that period of
14 time. But I think after the video, I went back up to Upper Press and was there for the
15 remainder of the day, and then just kind of -- as I mentioned, it was after the video came
16 out that I felt that I was going to resign, but I didn't communicate that to anyone at the
17 office.

18 Q Okay. So what did you do?

19 A So eventually, someone from Mark Meadows' team, Cassidy Hutchinson,
20 came over to the press office, Upper Press, and communicated to us that Secret Service
21 wanted everyone who was non-essential out of the White House before 6 p.m.

22 Q Okay. What's your understanding as to why?

23 A I think they were worried about safety concerns.

24 Q Specific to the White House or just generally? As I understand, the Mayor
25 issued a curfew at some point.

1 A Yes. So I think just generally they were concerned, and, so, they wanted all
2 non-essential people out, Cassidy communicated that to me. I asked if that included
3 Kayleigh, and she said that she thought that Kayleigh should also go home. And so I had
4 not spoken to Kayleigh since that previous conversation that I highlighted between Chad,
5 myself, and her, but I did pop into her office and -- because she was inside her office with
6 a couple other people. And I popped into her office and relayed the message from
7 Cassidy that had come from the chief, that they wanted to get people out of the complex
8 by that time. And so that was, I think, all that I said, and then I popped back out,
9 gathered my things, tried to collect as many things as I could from my desk because I
10 knew that I would not be returning the next day, and then went home.

11 Q Okay. Roughly, what time did you go home?

12 A Maybe 5:30.

13 Q Okay. And while you were at the White House, did you tell anybody that
14 you were going to resign?

15 A No, I did not tell anyone at that moment.

16 Q Okay. If you look at exhibit 8 -- I'm sorry, exhibit 9 --

17 A Uh-huh.

18 Q -- there's a tweet from President Trump at 6:01 p.m. on the 6th. He wrote,
19 these are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so
20 unceremoniously and viciously stripped away from the great patriots who have been
21 badly and unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love and in peace. Remember
22 this day forever, exclamation point.

23 Do you have any knowledge about the preparation of this tweet?

24 A No.

25 Q What was your reaction when you saw the tweet?

1 A Remember this day forever stuck out, and it felt like he was being
2 celebratory about the occasion which bothered me.

3 Q Okay. And did it impact at all your decision to resign?

4 A At that point, I had already decided I wanted to resign, but I wanted to talk
5 with my loved ones about my decision before doing so. And so I had already made up
6 my mind, but that further cemented my decision.

7 Q Okay. And did you talk to Ben Williamson about your decision?

8 A I did.

9 Q What did you say to him, and what did he say to you?

10 A I told him that -- he gave me a ride home that evening from the White
11 House, and he knew I was pretty upset. And I believe -- I can't remember if I now
12 mentioned this in the car or maybe if I -- I gave him a call later that evening, so I'm not
13 sure when I mentioned that I was planning to resign. But if I gave him any sort of heads
14 up, I can't recall. But I did call him that evening once I had, you know, conferred with
15 loved ones about what I was planning to do. And I called him and told him that I was
16 going to be resigning and asked if he could relay that info to Mark Meadows.

17 Q Okay. And what did he say?

18 A Just appreciated me giving him a heads up, and it was more just a casual
19 conversation, but I think he was -- he understood my decision is what I gathered.

20 Q And did you ever talk to Mark Meadows about it?

21 A I did not.

22 Q Did you ever talk to Mark Meadows about the events of January 6th?

23 A No.

24 Q Okay. And then who else did you tell about your resignation decision?

25 A I had consulted Alyssa Farah for advice on the matter prior, and she helped

1 me phrase my actual resignation. It wasn't a letter; I guess more of a statement. She
2 helped me -- she looked over, read over what I had put together.

3 And then prior to calling Ben, I believe I called Kayleigh McEnany first, since she
4 was my direct boss and informed her about my decision.

5 Q And what was her reaction?

6 A It was a short conversation, and she said thank you for letting me know, and
7 she wished me well.

8 Q Did you ever talk to the President about your resignation?

9 A No.

10 Q Have you spoken to President Trump since January 5th, 2021?

11 A No.

12 Q We've recently learned that Ms. McEnany had a call with President Trump
13 sometime a little after 9 p.m. on the 6th. Did Ms. McEnany ever tell you about that
14 conversation with the President?

15 A No. Ms. McEnany and I have not spoken since that phone call when I
16 resigned.

17 Q Is that because she was angry at you?

18 A I don't think she was thrilled with my decision.

19 Q Did she express that in some way when you had the conversation with her?

20 A Just her tone and that it was a short phone call and -- yeah.

21 Mr. Belevetz. Can I interrupt just a second?

22 Ms. Matthews. Yes. In addition to that, I did send a text message to her when I
23 saw it was her last day at the White House. It might have been a week or two after the
24 events of the 6th, and just touched base and said, you know, Hey, I saw it was your last
25 day. Hope you get some well-deserved time off and, like, thanks again for this

1 opportunity at the White House. I'm sorry for the way things ended, and did not receive
2 a response.

3 Q Okay. And did you have any further texts, emails, any kind of
4 communication with her after that?

5 A No.

6 Q So I'll pause here and see. I've sort of gone through, I think -- well, before I
7 go to see if any members have any questions, is there anything else you can recall from
8 January 6th itself?

9 A No.

10 [REDACTED] Okay. Do any members have questions about January 6th? Okay.
11 Staff?

12 Ms. Cheney. [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED] Yes.

14 Ms. Cheney. I want to say one thing. I have to actually jump off, but I want to
15 just make a statement to the witness.

16 And, Ms. Matthews, I just wanted to thank you. The honor and the integrity that
17 you're showing are impressive and important for the country. And I just wanted to say
18 thank you for being honest and straightforward and, again, just showing such integrity
19 and being here today.

20 Ms. Matthews. Thank you.

21 Ms. Cheney. Thank you very much.

22 BY [REDACTED]

23 Q So, Ms. Matthews, I'm going to now go back in time a little bit. On
24 December 1st, 2020, Attorney General Bill Barr made a statement to the Associated
25 Press, something to the effect of that there was no evidence of widespread fraud

1 sufficient to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

2 Were you aware in advance that the Attorney General was going to make a
3 statement along those lines?

4 A I don't know if I was personally aware, but I can't speak if others in the press
5 office were tipped off to that. But I -- from what I recall, I think we were generally
6 surprised by it.

7 Q Okay.

8 A We did not anticipate that interview.

9 Q Do you know whether the President was surprised by it?

10 A I believe he was.

11 Q Okay. Do you know anything about what his reaction was?

12 A No. I did not speak to him on that, but I think I recall hearing that he was
13 upset.

14 Q Do you remember where you heard that?

15 A No.

16 Q Do you remember if you heard it from the media or somebody on the White
17 House staff?

18 A Yeah. It could have been either.

19 Q And then later that month, meaning December 2020, Attorney General Barr
20 resigned. I think the effective date was December 23rd. Do you have any information
21 about why Attorney General Barr resigned?

22 A No.

23 Q Do you know what the reaction within the White House was to his
24 resignation?

25 A I think there had been assumptions prior to that that he might resign.

1 Q Why?

2 A I believe there was a meeting where Attorney General Barr came in, and I
3 can't recall when that meeting was, but I remember hearing that it was heated, and that
4 Ben Williamson mentioned to Kayleigh McEnany and I there was a chance that Barr might
5 resign.

6 Q Do you know what the heated meeting was about?

7 A I think it was about that interview and his statements.

8 Q Do you know whether Ben Williamson was in that meeting?

9 A I'm not sure. I don't think he was, though. I think he got a readout from
10 it from the Chief of Staff, Mark Meadows.

11 Q You've probably seen, at least in the news, about the President having
12 considered replacing Acting Attorney General Jeff Rosen with somebody named Jeff Clark
13 from the Justice Department. Did you hear anything about that other than through the
14 media?

15 A No. I didn't hear anything about it.

16 Q Okay. Do you have any knowledge regarding the President's meetings with
17 an attorney and law professor named John Eastman?

18 A No. I have no knowledge of it. I knew from, I think, media reports that
19 those -- that that man was meeting with the President, but I don't know anything the
20 details of those meetings or when or what was said.

21 Q So it's been reported that Dr. Eastman advised the President and the vice
22 president that the vice president had the authority either to reject electors from certain
23 contested States, or to postpone the joint session of Congress and send the issue back to
24 the States.

25 A Uh-huh.

1 Q Do you know whether the White House counsel's office had any opinion on
2 that?

3 A I can't recall, but now that you mention that, it -- I remember hearing that
4 that was the advice that he was giving. And I -- but I kind of -- I think I recall that there
5 was some sort of consensus in the White House that that wouldn't be possible.

6 Q Okay. Do you know who had the view that it was not possible?

7 A I think counsel's office.

8 Q Do you remember where you heard that?

9 A Potentially from Kayleigh.

10 Q Do you know whether Mark Meadows had a view as to what the Vice
11 President could or could not do about the election results?

12 A No.

13 Q Do you have any knowledge regarding efforts in seven States to get Trump
14 electors to meet and certify themselves as an alternate slate of electors to the ones
15 certified by the governors?

16 A No. I have no knowledge in the planning of that.

17 Q Do you know, did the President carry a cell phone?

18 A I'm not sure.

19 Q Do you know -- obviously, he tweeted, and I earlier conflated tweeting and
20 texts, so I know he tweeted, and we've talked about that. Do you know whether he also
21 sent or received text messages?

22 A No, I don't.

23 Q Do you know whether he ever used email?

24 A I don't.

25 Q So we talked a little bit about Dan Scavino's role in the digital team in terms

1 of, you know, sending out messages, but do you know what they did in terms of following
2 what was going on on social media?

3 A I'm not sure what their procedures were.

4 [REDACTED] Okay. I think that's all I have. Do any members have any other
5 questions?

6 [REDACTED] I have a couple things, [REDACTED]

7 [REDACTED] Okay.

8 BY [REDACTED]

9 Q To go back, Ms. Matthews, to the circumstances of your resignation
10 statement, what was your plan for releasing, or not releasing the statement that you
11 worked on with Ms. Farah and ultimately released about YOUR resignation?

12 A Yeah. So like I mentioned, I wanted to talk to my loved ones about my
13 decision before ultimately going through with it, because I knew that as a spokesperson
14 for the President that I would probably -- all the reporters have my phone number, so
15 they can bombard me with requests. And so I wanted to have a pre-prepared
16 statement of what led me to make that decision.

17 And so, yes, after then talking with my loved ones, getting advice from Alyssa
18 about the phrasing of the statement, I ultimately decided on a reporter that I trusted
19 to -- and after I made my phone calls as well to Kayleigh and Ben, I decided on a reporter
20 who I trusted, and that I had a good relationship with to give him my statement. So that
21 way, it would speak for itself, and I wouldn't have to engage with any reporters, and so I
22 shared the statement with John Roberts of Fox News.

23 Q And was that intended to be the one and only thing that you would say
24 about your resignation?

25 A Yes.

1 Q By giving a statement to Fox through Mr. Roberts, that would then be -- you
2 could point to that, or that would be the words to which you'd refer other questions?

3 A Exactly.

4 Q There are a couple words in the statement itself that I just wanted to ask you
5 about. You say -- I think you might have it.

6 A Yeah. What number is it?

7 Q I think it's exhibit 10 --

8 A Okay. Thank you.

9 Q -- if you could turn to that.

10 A Okay.

11 Q You say, "I was deeply disturbed by what I saw today."

12 Why was it important to you, Ms. Matthews, to put your personal feelings of
13 being disturbed about the events at the Capitol in your resignation statement?

14 A Because, you know, as someone who had worked for Congress, started out
15 my career there, you know, I look at the Capitol as a sacred place. And so to watch it be
16 under attack, to know I had friends in that building, it deeply disturbed me, and -- yeah.
17 So I would say that's why I mentioned that in my statement.

18 Q Yeah. You actually referenced it as someone who worked in the Halls of
19 Congress, I was deeply disturbed. So I see you actually, that's all one sentence, connect
20 your prior service to being deeply disturbed.

21 A Uh-huh.

22 Q You also say, "Our Nation needs a peaceful transfer of power."

23 That's the last line of your statement. Tell us more why you felt like it was
24 important to use those words, peaceful transfer of power, or make that part of your
25 statement.

1 A Yes. Because I felt like what had unfolded that day, you know, was an
2 attack on our democracy, and I felt that in my resignation statement, I wanted to make
3 clear that I felt that we needed to have that peaceful transfer of power and that the
4 President should -- President Trump needed to do so.

5 Q Is it fair to say -- or, actually, what time, do you remember, that you gave
6 this to John Roberts?

7 A It might have been around 8 p.m.

8 Q Okay. So it was right around the time that Congress was reconvening after
9 the riot had been suppressed?

10 A I'm not sure when they reconvened, but it sounds about right.

11 Q They reconvened at 8.

12 A Okay.

13 Q So it was around that time?

14 A Yeah.

15 Q Okay. And, also, fair to say that the President hadn't issued any sort of
16 statement using those words, peaceful transfer of power --

17 A No.

18 Q -- before you did?

19 A No.

20 Q Okay. And was it -- I don't want to put words in your mouth, but were you
21 essentially saying things that you thought he should say or should have said in your
22 resignation statement?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Over the course of the day, when you were talking with Ben and with Ms.
25 McEnany about encouraging the President to say things, did you talk about others who

1 might be helpful, other people that might have his ear or who he would listen -- he, the
2 President, would listen to?

3 A No.

4 Q Was there ever any reference to his family, for instance, his daughter or his
5 sons as some people that could get through to him or help the effort in which you were
6 engaged?

7 A No.

8 Q Were there ever any discussions of people that were on the other side or
9 people that might be telling him inconsistent advice to that which you and
10 Mr. Williamson were encouraging your bosses to give him?

11 A Not that I was aware of.

12 Q Okay. I'm just trying to get a sense of your personal knowledge that day
13 about who you thought beyond you might be involved in influencing him and on what
14 side.

15 A Yeah. The only people that I knew that were directly, I guess, giving him
16 advice, directly to the President, were the ones that Kayleigh had mentioned that were in
17 there when she went in there which was Mark Meadows, Ivanka Trump, and Kayleigh
18 McEnany.

19 Q Okay.

20 A But I'm not aware of who else was in there and who also may have been
21 conveying a similar sentiment.

22 Q I see. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

23 [REDACTED] Does anybody else have anything?

24

BY [REDACTED]

25 Q Okay. So I'll just ask one last question. Is there anything else that you can

1 think of that the committee should know? You have a sense of the kinds of things that
2 we're interested in. Is there anything that we have not asked about that you think we
3 should?

4 A There was some sort of conversation that I can't remember the details of,
5 but I remember Kayleigh and Mark Meadows talking about the National Guard. And I
6 believe Kayleigh tweeted something out from her @pressec Twitter account, and I know
7 they had some sort of conversation about the calling of the National Guard. I'm not
8 really sure of the details of it, but that's something else that I think is relevant, but I don't
9 have that much insight into it. I just know that that -- there was a conversation that
10 took place that led her to tweet something about the National Guard.

11 Q Do you know whether there was any kind of dispute or disagreement about
12 whether the National Guard should be deployed?

13 A I think there was more confusion about what was happening with the
14 National Guard than anything.

15 Q As to whether it had already been deployed or whether they were on their
16 way as opposed -- rather than whether they should be called?

17 A Something like that, yes.

18 Q Okay.

19 A But that's the only other thing that I can think of.

20 Q Okay. Great.

21 [REDACTED] And that took place on January 6th itself?

22 Ms. Matthews. Correct. Okay.

23 [REDACTED] Great. Thank you very much for your time. The committee
24 greatly appreciates your cooperation, and with that, we will go off the record.

25 [Whereupon, at 12:48 p.m., the interview was concluded.]

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Certificate of Deponent/Interviewee

4

5

6 I have read the foregoing ____ pages, which contain the correct transcript of the
7 answers made by me to the questions therein recorded.

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Witness Name

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Date

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